

"Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Seamen:" The Lower-Deck Complement of a Postwar Canadian Navy Destroyer – The Case of HMCS *Crescent*, March 1949

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The year 1949 is remembered as one of crisis and reform in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). On 26 February, at Manzanillo, Mexico, ninety Leading Seamen and below in His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) *Athabaskan* locked themselves in their mess decks, refusing to come out until their collective grievances had been heard by the captain. Two weeks later, eighty-three junior ratings in HMCS *Crescent* staged a similar protest. Alongside in Nanking, China, they were unaware of the previous incident, but news was now spreading through the fleet. On 20 March, thirty-two aircraft handlers in *Magnificent* briefly refused to turn to morning cleaning stations as ordered.

Something evidently was wrong in the Canadian fleet. Since the sailors had offered no hint of violence, no one used the charged word "mutiny." But the "incidents," as they came to be called, had transpired in suspiciously rapid succession. A Communist-inspired strike in the Canadian merchant marine in 1948 sparked fears of subversion in the naval service, and the Minister of Defence, Brooke Claxton, ordered a commission of inquiry to investigate the state of the RCN.

The resulting *Mainguy Report* found no organized or subversive influences.' Its candour in laying bare many of the problems in general service conditions is nonetheless remarkable, and it rightly has been described as a watershed in the development of the modern RCN.' The Commissioners identified the breakdown of the divisional system of personnel management, frequent changes in ships' routines with inadequate explanation, and the absence of a distinguishing Canadian identity.' They laid special emphasis upon the failure in each of the affected ships to provide functioning welfare committees to allow the airing and correction of petty grievances.' They also noted an "artificial distance between officers and men," which subsequently has developed into a debate over the degree of "Britishness" of the RCN.

But our understanding of the mutinies remains incomplete. Reading the *Mainguy Report* and the volumes of testimony from which it was prepared, one is struck, as were the Commissioners, by the banality of the men's grievances and their difficulties in articulating them.' This paper proposes that neither the absence of welfare committees nor the men's lack

of higher education can fully account for the acts of indiscipline or their poor attempts at explanation, but that the institutional context in which the mutinies occurred – something beyond the ken of an ordinary seaman but nonetheless of consequence to his world – is of critical importance. Analysis of the structure and composition of the lower-deck complement – the non-commissioned ratings – of one of the mutinous ships offers revealing insights into the problems plaguing the postwar RCN.

The world of the lower deck is a fertile field for research. Much has been written about naval policy and operations, but little insight into naval society exists other than the contemporary accounts of William Pugsley, a public relations officer who went "undercover" to report life as viewed from the mess decks, and anecdotal wartime accounts, such as those of Hal Lawrence and James Lamb.¹ Louis Audette, one of the Commissioners, took the first hard look at the postwar navy with his deliberately provocative essay, "The Lower Deck and the Mainguy Report," which, the title notwithstanding, really only concentrated on the difficult officer-man relationships of the time and has fed into the caricature of an indifferent officer corps rampant in its Britishness, to the exclusion of Canadian values.² The clearly inferred corollary is the characterization of the lower deck as "the cream of Canadian youth." Like all good stereotypes, each has some grounding in fact, but neither has been properly analysed.

The Mainguy Commission described certain contextual pre-conditions to the *Report* that are not readily apparent to a modern reader, some fifty years on. Laden with meaning to contemporary readers were "Some General Observations" by the Commissioners:

The times in which we live, like all postwar times, are full of restlessness, uncertainty and change...The social and economic uncertainties and changes, ...and the general deterioration in the discipline of family life, which is one of the misfortunes of our times, press with particular intensity on the lives of young men...In our Navy there is a mingling of men of old traditions, of new traditions and of no traditions. Our ship's crews are a mixture compounded of the Royal Canadian Navy with many years of training in peace and in war; of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, who gained all their experience in the grim, swift and exciting days of war; and of men who during the years of peace with little training at sea or on shore have, from motives that vary from patriotism and love of adventure to the stark necessity of earning a living, joined the Naval Defences of the country.

Noting that "[t]hese defences have grown and shrunk in a manner unparalleled" from a pre-war total strength of only 1585 officers and men, to a wartime peak of over 93,000, and back down to the 1949 total of 8800, the Commissioners concluded that "[s]uch growth and reduction need no verbal comment. Every such process must have its accompanying stresses and pains."⁸

David Zimmerman has led the way in proper statistical analysis of the Canadian naval service. He has clearly established the different social backgrounds between the officer and lower-deck "classes" of the wartime navy, while pointing also to distinctions among the three branches of that service: the core permanent force, or "straight-strippers;" the naval reservists with previous marine service (RCNR); and the Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR), or

"wavy navy."⁹ Bob Caldwell has taken that one step further, outlining the growth of a distinct "VR culture" and its expression in the Halifax riots on VE-Day.¹⁰ Finally, Peter Archambault has situated the Canadian mutinies of 1949 firmly in the social tradition of British navies."

If these latter gentlemen have written so much, why do we know so little of the postwar navy? The reasons are varied. Although the works of Zimmerman and Caldwell have important implications for the immediate postwar period, they were writing about the wartime navy. The fleet that mutinied in 1949 was different in several important respects. As for Archambault, when he undertook his research nearly a decade ago, several critical files were still "closed" under the restrictive Canadian Access to Information and Privacy laws. More problematic, discussion of the postwar navy has tended to devolve to the mutinies in general and from there to the specific issue of the degree of "Britishness" of the officer corps.

There is also the problem of primary source material: when it comes to the postwar RCN, especially the lower deck, there is none. Interviews with ratings are far less common than with officers, and even these for the most part are anecdotal at best for the 1945-1950 years, concentrating instead on operations in the Second World War and the Korean conflict which bookend the period. Finally, the naval system of personnel file management effectively restricts statistical analysis to the officer corps, for which a useful sampling can quickly be drawn from *The Navy List*.¹² No similar lower-deck listing exists, however, and even a random selection would encompass files from the entire postwar period up to unification in 1964, a span of twenty years with so many other social upheavals as to compound the variables exponentially. Any attempt at a "snapshot" for a particular year would be impractical.

Faced with such a *de facto* obstacle, I was fortunate to find a nominal roll for HMCS *Crescent*, dated 31 March 1949. That this is the only such list it has been possible to uncover from a ship of this period makes it an exceedingly rare archival record.¹³ Its value is increased in that the list, prepared only two weeks after the incident and before any crew changes could be effected, allows a look into a ship that mutinied. Admittedly, one ship does not a navy make. There are problems in extrapolating any conclusions to cover the entire naval establishment, but using this invaluable material it is possible to begin to bridge the void in our understanding of the lower-deck world of the postwar RCN. From that can be offered an alternative context for the mutinies in the Canadian navy in February and March of 1949.

Crescent's roll lists a complement of fourteen officers and 187 men. Observing the requirements of federal privacy legislation (that personal information be utilized for statistical purposes, and that the use of any specific examples be rendered anonymous), the individual service files were requested from the National Archive's Personnel Records Centre to build a database with the following variables: name, rank (with date of promotion), branch and trade, date and place of recruitment, entry plan, previous occupation, date of joining and departing *Crescent*, date released and discharge type, date and place of birth, ethnic origin, religion, and marital status.¹⁴ All fourteen officers' files were available, but five of the ratings (2.7% of the sample) could not be located; of the remainder, most information required could be obtained from a combination of attestation (recruiting) papers and service certificates (form NS-815), although in several instances either or both were missing or incomplete. The base sample, therefore, generally comprises 182 individuals,

with some variations depending upon criteria. This database will be used below in comparison to the complement for a *Crescent-class* ship as established by the 1946 Complement Committee.¹⁵ This is supplemented by the testimony of members of *Crescent's* ship's company before the Mainguy Commission,¹⁶ and by interviews conducted by the author. Where comparisons are made to the Canadian population, the source is the 1951 census (1949 figures where available) reported in *Historical Statistics of Canada*. "

Table 1
HMCS *Crescent* - Ethnic Origin

Ethnicity	Crescent		Canadian Population	
	No.	%	No.	%
British	145	77.54%	6709685	47.89%
French	6	3.21%	4319167	30.83%
Nordic	9	4.81%	326769	2.33%
Slavic	16	8.56%	416447	2.97%
Mediterranean	3	1.60%	201827	1.44%
German	3	1.60%	619995	4.43%
Unknown	5	2.67%		
Other			1415539	10.10%
Total	187	100.00%	14009429	100.00%

Source: See text.

Table 2
HMCS *Crescent* - Religious Affiliation

Denomination	Crescent		Canadian Population	
	No.	%	No.	%
Anglican	74	39.57%	2060720	14.61%
Baptist	9	4.81%	519585	3.68%
Evangelical	3	1.60%	50900	0.36%
Greek Orthodox	4	2.14%	172271	1.22%
Lutheran	6	3.21%	444923	3.15%
Mormon	3	1.60%	32888	0.23%
Pentecostal	1	0.53%	95131	0.67%
Presbyterian	13	6.95%	781747	5.54%
Roman Catholic	12	6.42%	6069496	43.04%
Salvation Army	1	0.53%	70275	0.50%
Ukranian Catholic	1	0.53%	190831	1.35%
United	52	27.81%	2867271	20.33%
Other		0.00%	365370	2.59%
No Religion	1	0.53%	59679	0.42%
Not Stated	7	3.74%	322017	2.28%
Total	187	100.00%	14103104	100.00%

Source: See text.

What then can this information tell us about the "society" of an RCN destroyer? Dealing first with the non-military factors, we see most obviously that it was exclusively male, overwhelmingly white (i.e., of European extraction) and young. In that era, gender was not an issue. Women serving in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) had filled some 5900 wartime shore positions, thus allowing men to serve at sea, and although the RCN was beginning to consider bringing them back in a similar capacity to meet the

present shortfall in strength, there was no question of them serving at sea.¹⁸ Aside from gender, youth was the distinguishing feature. The median age was 22.5, with the youngest being 18.5, and only four were over thirty-five (including both the coxswain and the Chief Engine Room Artificer [CERA]; the captain was only thirty-one). As for ethnic origin, fully 145 (77.5%) claimed "British" ancestry, with the next most common being Slavic (8.6%) and Nordic (4.8%). Only six (3.2%) members of the crew were French (see table 1). With respect to religious denominations, together Anglican, United and Presbyterian constituted seventy-four percent (corresponding roughly, but not exactly, to ethnic origin); twelve (6.4%) were Roman Catholic; with the remainder comprising an ecumenical smattering of Baptist, Lutheran, Mormon and Greek Orthodox. Only one claimed no affiliation and seven, or 3.7%, could not be determined (see table 2).

Table 3
HMCS Crescent — Recruiting Location

Division	Location	Number
Naden	Esquimalt	29
Malahat	Victoria	9
Discovery	Vancouver	31
Chatham	Prince Rupert	1
Nonsuch	Edmonton	15
Tecumseh	Calgary	33
Queen	Regina	20
Unicorn	Saskatoon	7
Chippawa	Winnipeg	21
Griffon	Port Arthur	4
Hunter	Windsor	0
Prevost	London, Ontario	0
Star	Hamilton	2
York	Toronto	1
Cataraqui	Kingston	1
Carleton	Ottawa	2
Donnacona	Montreal	2
Montcalm	Quebec City	0
Brunswicker	Saint John	0
Queen Charlotte	Charlottetown	0
Stadacona	Halifax	2
Scotian	Halifax	0
Niobe	Great Britain	1
Unknown		6
	Total	187

Source: See text.

A notable limitation on the sampling of the ethnic and religious categories is that in 1946 the RCN adopted a "drafting" or posting policy based upon Home Port divisions; that is, sailors serving in Halifax would be recruited in Eastern Canada or have a stated preference for serving there, while those in Esquimalt would be from Western Canada. *Crescent*, being in the Esquimalt Home Port division, reflected this in that all but eleven ratings (with another six unknown) were recruited west of the Lakehead (see table 3). The significant French Roman Catholic population of Québec remains unaccounted for (those claiming French ancestry were all from Manitoba and Saskatchewan); likewise, the black

communities of Nova Scotia and southern Ontario are not represented. Although the prewar policy restricting recruitment to candidates of the "white race" or "descendants of pure European stock" had been lifted officially during the war, as late as May 1947 the Cabinet Defence Committee agreed "that in some cases it might be advisable to refuse applications for enlistment from Canadians of foreign racial origin."¹⁹ Anecdotal evidence, such as the occasional photograph in the RCN magazine, *Crowsnest*, attests to blacks in the postwar service. Significantly, however, few orientais felt sufficiently comfortable in their adopted land to serve and, despite their proportionately higher representation in the West, none were borne in *Crescent*.²⁰ Likewise, aboriginals do not appear to be represented, although certain of the French sailors may have been of Métis extraction. Only seventeen of the crew had been born outside of Canada (fifteen in Britain and one each in Czechoslovakia and Latvia). Interestingly, of the thirty-seven claiming ancestry other than British, only one had served prior to the war, further implying that the prewar lower deck, like the officer corps, was not immune to Anglophilia, and that ethnic diversity was a byproduct of wartime and the postwar social upheaval.

Given the Western "bias" of the sample, not many other useful comparisons to the Canadian population can be made, except perhaps in the matter of pay, a subject of constant concern to postwar sailors. As early as mid-1947, the failure of service rates of pay to keep pace with those available in civilian life had been identified as having a negative impact on morale. Late in 1948, a pay raise finally was obtained, which must have proven satisfactory, because not one of *Crescent's* witnesses before the Mainguy Commission complained of pay in a general sense, other than in special circumstances which will be discussed below.²¹ Under the new rates of pay, the typical ordinary seaman could count on an annual wage of \$864, not much compared to the annual average of \$2067 (1949 figures) earned by production workers, but acceptable considering junior rates living on board had few other expenses. Indeed, given that prior to joining the majority were students or employed in the more typical service industries (which had 1949 average earnings of \$1400), comparison to that sector is perhaps more appropriate; that rate could be approximated by a Petty Officer 2nd Class (Trade Group II) at \$1260, a rank it was possible to attain within six to eight years of joining (although an exceptional case, sailor #169, recruited in February 1945, was promoted to this rank in February 1949). For the record, the highest non-commissioned wage earner was a Chief Petty Officer 1st Class (Trade Group IV), at \$2208; a junior sub-lieutenant made only slightly less, at \$2172; the captain (lieutenant-commander with more than three years in rank) earned \$3516.

Those who felt the differences most were the married hands. Halifax especially, but Victoria as well, was experiencing little respite from the wartime housing shortage which would continue into the 1950s, and, although the Navy had begun the construction of married quarters with some ninety-two "temporary" units in Halifax, none would appear in Esquimalt until late 1950.²² In short, if a married sailor could find a place for his family, it was likely to be expensive and sub-standard; it was just as unlikely that his wife would want or be able to find her own employment. To minimize the impact on family life of making do on only one reduced income, and of extended periods away from home by the husband-father, the RCN actively discouraged marriage by younger sailors. An additional allowance of \$30 per month (administered at the unit level and also increased, from \$20, in October 1948) was given to married ratings, but *KRCNs* stipulated that a sailor could not receive it until he had reached the age of twenty-three (twenty-five in the case of officers). In *Crescent*,

as of March 1949 sixty-nine ratings were married (marital status could not be determined for eighteen, the remainder were single). Of these, eighteen were under twenty-three years of age, yet only one appears not to have been receiving marriage allowance. *KRCNs* allowed persons of any age who had served during the war to receive the allowance, and this possibly accounts for two of the cases, although neither was married until well after the war (sailors #155 and #47, in August 1947 and September 1948, respectively). In every other instance except the one noted, the men had been recruited in late-1945 or 1946, when the wartime "emergency" was still deemed officially to exist. Still, this was not the strict bureaucratic interpretation of regulations that might have been expected. When sailor #147 appeared before the Commission, he testified that "there are so many different angles and stories about [marriage allowance], that you don't know whether you can get it or not. One person will tell you, you have to be twenty-three, and the next day someone nineteen will get married...and he gets it." Obviously taken aback, but recovering quickly, the board member replied, "Well, definitely no one can get married until they are twenty-three." Within a month of this exchange sailor #147 got married, still only twenty-one years of age, and began to draw the allowance; indeed, within six months of their return from China in June 1949, this sequence was repeated by a further eight of his shipmates, all under the age of twenty-three. Another, #124, questioned the very concept of a marriage allowance: "Why don't they all get equal, single or married men?...[It] works out...[that] a married man can save more than a single man." He was advised flatly, "[t]hat is a matter of opinion...there should be some difference in what a married man and a single man get." Having accepted the inherent validity of such an allowance, the explanation as to why its restrictions tended to be overlooked can only be that, contrary to the conventional image of an "uncaring" leadership, divisional and supply officers were deliberately misinterpreting regulations to provide some relief to junior ratings in financial need. As noted earlier, in only one instance was the allowance apparently not provided to a married under-age sailor. He had been recruited in October 1947, just after the Minister had stood down the armed forces of Canada from active service. Even then, however, the allowance appears to have been withheld in part out of compassion – to improve his chances of obtaining an early discharge – on the grounds that "[h]is retention in the Service is causing his wife hardship."²³

That case makes for a good transition to the more purely military factors of postwar lower-deck society, for it raises two other issues. First, the rating in question had put in his request for discharge not for financial reasons but because his long-sought transfer to the Electrical Branch was being delayed "because of [a] shortage of Seamen." Second, his eventual discharge was approved under the controversial item "By Purchase." Both of these will be examined at length below, but it is necessary first to explore the driving forces behind them.

The key to understanding any of the ills of the postwar navy is recognition of the staggering manning crisis it was experiencing. As noted above, in their "General Observations" the Commissioners referred briefly to "the accompanying stresses and pains...[of] growth and reduction" in the RCN. Much has been done to expose these as generated by wartime expansion, first by Marc Milner and most recently by Roger Sarty, and in counterpoint the relatively smooth process of demobilization to civilian life has been explored, but the postwar reorganization of the armed forces awaits similar treatment. The RCN, smallest and least appealing of the three services, felt it particularly acutely.²⁴ Reducing a complex story to its bare essentials, the RCN ended the Second World War with

plans for an eventual postwar force of 20,000 men in two fleet units (one per coast), each comprising a carrier, cruiser, and destroyer flotilla. In the interest of postwar economy, and recognizing that it would take about ten years to build up to the preferred level, the RCN accepted the government's imposition of what became known as the Interim Force, with a personnel establishment of 10,000 (the Army and Air Force had similar restrictions of 25,000 and 16,000 men, respectively). It would be understandable, but erroneous, to assume that the most difficult aspect of achieving the postwar levels was the matter of downsizing from 93,000 to 10,000. That was how the Naval Staff saw it up to August 1945. In reality, the earlier-than-anticipated end to the war with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan meant that the groundwork for the Navy's postwar plans had not yet been fully implemented. The demobilization process engendered some confusion as to the actual strength of the RCN, but by 1 April 1946 it was assessed at 696 officers and 4111 ratings, not even half the authorized peacetime total.²⁵

Fresh recruits were still pouring in, even if not at the wildly optimistic anticipated rate of 1500 per quarter, but given the length of time required to train professional sailors of whatever trade (up to three to four years for even the most junior ratings), it would be some time before the RCN could work up to the postwar establishment.²⁶ Besides, recruiting was only part of the problem. The success of the Interim Force was predicated upon the absorption of a number of experienced wartime personnel for a limited time, but the navy now found that it could not entice enough war-weary men to stay on when demobilization benefits and civilian job prospects seemed so bright. In desperation, the Naval Staff resorted at first to postponing the demobilization of certain trades beyond the planned end-date of February 1946, and then to refusing to consider the release of men who had undertaken a seven-year engagement in the RCN in 1940-1941, in the early years of the war before RCNVR recruiting had begun in earnest, but on the assumption that they were signing on "for hostilities only" (after 1945, the navy reverted to a five-year engagement period, to bring it in line with army and air force terms of service).²⁷ While stanching the immediate problem, these steps were in the end counter-productive: they had an understandably negative impact on the morale of the affected men, in turn spreading dissatisfaction throughout the fleet and provoking a sudden rise in releases as soon as the seven-year engagements were completed. For a variety of reasons, the resulting shortage was felt most acutely in that branch of the service known as "Seaman" (responsible for a ship's weapons and detection systems, and upper deck husbandry), as distinct from the Engineering (ERAs and Stokers), Communication and Supply Branches.

This all came to a head in the spring and summer of 1947, when a series of "incidents," presaging those of 1949, in HMCS *Micmac*, *Nootka*, and *Ontario*, and in the fleet school in Stadacona (Halifax), provoked the Naval Staff to undertake a wide-ranging survey into "Morale and Service Conditions in the RCN." In his October 1947 report on the subject to the minister, the new Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice-Admiral Harold Grant, wrote that "[a]s evidence of the current unpopularity of life afloat, one has only to compare the number of discharges and desertions over the last quarter [Spring 1947] with the number of new entries, i.e., 231 discharged, 92 desertions, and 230 entries" – in other words, a net loss, or "wastage" as it was termed, of ninety-three men.²⁸

Table 4
HMCS *Crescent* – Complement by Rank and Branch

Branch	Rank	Auth'd - War		Auth'd - Peace		Mar 49 - Act'l	
Seaman	CPO	3		2		5	
	PO	7		8		9	
	LS	12		10		9	
Communication	AB/OS	106	128	77	97	56	79
	CPO	0		0		1	
	PO	2		2		2	
	LS	6		2		2	
Engine Room	AB/OS	15	23	10	14	4	9
	CPO	2		2		6	
	PO	18		14		18	
	LS	12		11		10	
Artificers	AB/OS	25	57	23	50	26	60
	CPO	1		1		5	
	PO	7		7		4	
	LS	0		0		3	
Supply	AB/OS	0	8	0	8	1	13
	CPO	0		0		2	
	PO	7		7		8	
	LS	7		6		0	
AB/OS		13	27	11	24	16	26
Total			243		193		187

Note: Seaman and Engine Room includes elements joined to form the Electrical Branch, reorganized in 1947.

Source: National Archives of Canada, Record Group 24, Acc. 83-84/ 167, box 129, file 1279-22, "72-1, Complement – *Crescent* Class Destroyer," 28 October 1946; and HMCS *Crescent* nominal roll, 31 March 1949.

How was all of this reflected in the composition of *Crescent's* ship's company? We have already noted that the nominal roll being used here listed fourteen officers and 187 ratings. This was close to the strength established by the navy's own Complement Committee, which had determined that the efficient running of that class of ship required a peacetime complement, recognizing its training role, of twelve officers and 193 ratings. But this was considerably below the wartime establishment, which more realistically approximated the situation in which *Crescent* was to find itself in China, of fourteen officers and 243 ratings (see table 4). The most serious shortfall was in the Seaman Branch, below its peace and war establishments respectively by some eighteen and forty-nine seamen. It could have been worse. The mission to China was announced the morning the Pacific squadron, *Crescent* included, was to sail for fleet exercises in the Caribbean. While *Crescent* remained behind to re-store for the East Asian cruise, some twenty reservists were hurriedly exchanged for twenty-five RCN seamen from HMCS *Ontario*, literally as that ship was sailing. Evidently the navy was having difficulties meeting its shipboard complements. Indeed, *Crescent* was not in any way unique in this regard, for this general state of affairs was delaying, among others, the transfer out of the Seaman Branch by sailor #66, described above.

Harking back to the Commissioners' observations on "old, new and no" traditions, and the desire of the navy to base its postwar establishment on a solid core of men with valuable experience from the recent war, a useful analysis can be made of when the ratings enlisted, and under what terms (see table 5). In the broadest categories, of the 187 men, only thirteen (6.95%) had pre-war RCN experience; seventy-five (40.11%) joined during the war (i.e., before October 1945; entries up to that time had a reasonable expectation of going to war); and ninety-four (50.27%) enlisted in the postwar period. On closer examination, the longest serving of the prewar RCNs had joined in 1932, while the bulk had enlisted within two years of the outbreak of war – not a great depth of experience, but arguably the best of the interwar period, in the heady days of rearmament and meaningful training exercises. Further breakdown of the wartime total reveals that thirty joined the RCN, mostly within the first two years of the war; thirteen transferred from the RCNVR into the permanent force at some point during the war; and another thirteen were enticed by the Interim Force offer. Fully seventeen VRs, however, had been demobilized but, not being able to make a go of it in civilian life for whatever reason, rejoined the navy within a year or two. Of the postwar entries, one-third had less than eighteen months in the service, and as such were still considered to be in training.

Table 5
HMCS *Crescent* – Entry Distribution

Enlistment Type	Number	Sub-Total	Percent
Pre-war – RCN	13	13	6.95%
Wartime – RCN	30		
RCNR Transfer	1		
RN Transfer	1		
RCNVR Transfer	13		
RCNVR Interim Force	13		
RCNVR Re-entry	17	75	40.11%
Postwar – RCNR Transfer	1		
RCNR New Entry	93	94	50.27%
Unknown	5	5	2.67%
Total	187	187	100.00%

Source: See text.

For a fighting force, the only real experience is war. Only three and one-half years after the end of the recent global conflict, fully half of the ship's company could not possibly claim any benefit from it. But even with respect to the remainder, did *Crescent* enjoy the true fruits of hard-won experience? On the voyage across the Pacific, the captain, Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr) David Groos, a decorated wartime commanding officer (he had commanded the destroyer *Restigouche*, 1943-1945), had the opportunity to observe his new ship and crew. In a report written that February 1949, and later submitted as a deposition to the Mainy Commission, he complained of:

only more mediocrity stemming back to the war years...For the most part, the Officers [and Chiefs and Petty Officers] are full of enthusiasm and keenness. Their enthusiasm however is somewhat nullified by reason of the

fact that their knowledge of Naval matters, other than the strictly professional technical knowledge of their branch, is greatly limited.

As he also noted, this was not to cast any aspersions on the men then borne in the ship; rather it was a reflection of the hasty training they had received during the war, never properly reinforced, as Milner and Sarty have demonstrated, and the "vital failure...[of] the Navy...[to imbue in them] any lasting pride of Service or sense of duty whatsoever."²⁹



Figure 1: HMCS *Crescent* departing Esquimalt harbour for East Asia, 2 February 1949.

Source: National Archives of Canada, PA-115389.

In hindsight, one must question even his reported satisfaction with their technical abilities. Preparation of the database revealed, for example, a disproportionate number of stokers and engine room artificers who had spent the war years either attached to shore establishments or at sea in co rvettes and frigates – that is, without experience in a steam turbine-powered ship such as a fleet destroyer. At the same time, the under-strength Seaman and Electrical Branches could not hope to keep abreast of the increasing complexity and proliferation of the full range of modern weapons, radars and other combat systems. The Electrical Officer who joined *Crescent* after the China cruise remembers spending an inordinate amount of time replacing the heavy "temporary" wartime lead cabling at frequent intervals, especially after the jarring of gun firings. The shortage of trained men in the Seaman Branch compounded the problem, such that the proficiency of even that most fundamental of naval capabilities – gun firing – was dubious. Then-Able Seaman Jim Tyre recalls that there were only enough trained ratings to man one mounting at a time, a situation no different from *Cayuga*, from which he and several of his mates had paid off into refit in

December 1948 before being drafted to *Crescent*. Indeed, even though *en route* to the active war zone of the Chinese Civil War, *Crescent* undertook very few shoots during the trans-Pacific passage, none of them at a meaningful target, and few at a level above basic gun-functioning exercises (see figure 1).³⁰

All this was compounded by the astounding rate of turnover in the ship's company, a situation that appears the norm rather than the exception. On the first anniversary of its commissioning, *Crescent's* first captain observed in September 1946 that "the following statistics on the complement changes during the past year may be of interest:"

- (1) A total of fifty-one officers and 532 men have been borne on the ship's book as part of complement during this period.
- (2) Of the sixteen officers and 184 men who originally commissioned the ship only the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, Gunner and eight men still remain.
- (3) An additional twenty-five officers, 104 naval cadets, approximately 450 men and forty-six sea cadets have been borne for training at various times."

By 1949, the situation had scarcely changed. In addition to the twenty-five men embarked on 28 January from *Ontario*, sixty-three ratings had joined *Crescent* since it had last sailed in mid-November, while at least 143 (records could not be found for ten), or three-quarters of the crew, had not been in the ship longer than a year. The officers fared no better: three specialists were embarked for the cruise, and quite apart from them, the Captain, Executive Officer, TAS (Torpedo Anti-Submarine specialist) Officer, Ordnance Officer, and both sub-lieutenants had joined since mid-November 1948; only the Engineering Officer could boast having been aboard for more than a year.

Not only could *Crescent* not be considered a worked-up ship by any definition, this continuing turnover points to the basic turmoil of postwar naval life. Several of *Crescent's* officers appearing before the Mainguy Commission complained of the poor attitude of postwar recruits to discipline, on the premise that they had spent the war years at home without the steadying hand of a father. One could just as easily surmise these same lads joining the Navy in search of that elusive stability, and not finding it, except as expressed in an apparent fetish for prewar spit and polish.³² When the Commissioners reported the breakdown of the divisional system, they attributed it to the inexperience and lack of training of the officers. But that belies the fact that even the best-trained and most experienced officers could not have made work a system of personnel management that did not allow officers and men to serve together sufficiently long to become familiar enough with each other for juniors to bring forward personal problems and seniors to offer appropriate individual advice. For all the unpleasantness culminating in the incident in *Crescent* on 15 March 1949, one immediately recognizable benefit of the five-month China cruise was that it provided the first prolonged period without any changes in the complement for a postwar RCN ship. The proof would come with the next war – Korea, only a year in the future – but that would be against an unconventional naval enemy, and a modern, critical analysis of Canadian performance in that conflict remains to be done.³³ The long deployments there would reinforce the stabilizing lesson learned by *Crescent*. Indeed, an argument can be put

forward that the postwar RCN was more properly a product of the operational experience of the Korean War than of World War II.

Table 6
HMCS *Crescent* - Rank Distribution

Rank	Complement Cmttee (1946)				March 1949	
	War		Peace		(New Ratings)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
C 1	6	2.47%	5	2.60%	7	3.74%
C2					13	6.95%
PI	41	16.87%	37	19.27%	25	13.37%
P2					17	9.09%
LS	37	15.23%	30	15.63%	22	11.76%
AB	159	65.43%	120	62.50%	75	40.11%
OS					28	14.97%
Total	243	100.00%	192	100.00%	187	100.00%

Source: See table 4.

A comparison of tables 4 and 6 reveals that, if there were a shortage of traditional seamen, *Crescent* was overborne in Chiefs and Petty Officers: twenty and forty-two, respectively, against authorized complements of six and forty-one (war), and five and thirty-seven (peacetime complement). This points to what was perhaps the single most contentious matter then affecting *Crescent's*, or for that matter any RCN ship's, complement: the navy-wide restructuring of substantive ratings which came into effect at the beginning of February. Designed to bring the navy's rank and trade group structure into line with those of the army and air force, the new system was hardly a surprise, as advanced draft copies had been circulated through the fleet for comment in the fall, and a full two pages in the second issue of the RCN's new lower deck magazine, *Crowsnest*, were used to promote the scheme.³⁴

The initial attempt at tri-service harmonization of the pay scale had been undertaken in 1946, even before Brooke Claxton became Minister with a mandate to bring about the integration of the forces.³⁵ The army and the air force had brought their structures very closely in line, but the navy had maintained a separate five-tier lower-deck rank structure (as opposed to the others' seven-tier, which differed in having two levels of each of the petty officer or sergeant and of the chief petty officer or warrant ranks) and also did not rigidly adhere to the others' trade-group progression, continuing instead with variances in specialist technician pay, the most prominent being "charge" pay for ERAs in recognition of their special responsibilities for running propulsion machinery. In the wake of the morale crisis of 1947, the navy came to recognize that its half-hearted effort at integration had in fact left it with a far smaller proportion of the pay budget than that enjoyed by either the army or air force.³⁶ At the same time, the growing crisis in Europe over the Berlin blockade focussed

Naval Staff attention on mobilization plans. Expansion problems during the recent war were assessed as being in part the result of "[in]sufficient numbers of men in the upper branches to permit the efficient operation of the navy at the commencement of an emergency, with the inevitable influx of untrained personnel, until the length of time required to train additional senior ratings has elapsed."³⁸

A special committee was struck to propose a solution, and for the next several months it struggled to rationalize the root problem:

the fact that the Army and the Air Force consider that men improve in trade skill through time, whereas the Navy considers that both technical knowledge and Service experience are required for the effective performance of any job. Consequently, skill in trade qualifies a man for substantive [rank] advancement, thus interlocking substantive and trade pay in the Navy concept.³⁸

The author of that statement, LCdr (later Vice-Admiral and Chief of Personnel in the newly integrated National Defence Headquarters [NDHQ]) Ralph Hennessy, might have added that a sub-text to their discussions was another root difficulty: getting the other services (and the Minister) to recognize that naval conditions of service were unique – living space in a ship, and hence crew numbers, was at a premium in comparison to an air base or even a field unit; sailors had to combine several functions out of sheer necessity, and without the redundancy the other forces enjoyed.

In the end, the Committee determined that strict adoption of the army-air force rank and trade-group system was the only workable compromise, and that it should be implemented in combination with an increase in the authorized percentage of substantive ratings, Leading Seaman and above, from the present 45.8% to 51.74%, as follows:³⁹

Present		Proposed	
Rate	%	Rate	
CPO	7.0	CPO- 1 st Cl.	5.21
PO	17.9	CPO-2nd Cl.	7.94
Ldg Rate	18.1	PO-1s Cl.	13.39
		⚡	12.40
		Ldg Rate	<u>12.80</u>
	<u>45.8</u>		51.74

The new distribution was to be effected essentially by promoting all present Leading rates with more than three years seniority to the new rank of Petty Officer 2ⁿ^d Class; present POs with less than three years seniority would become Petty Officers 1st Class; those with more than three years seniority would be promoted to Chief Petty Officer 2ⁿ^d Class; and all present CPOs would become Chief Petty Officers 1st Class.

The new structure met the various objectives of Tri-service harmonization, simplification of the pay system, more equitable division of pay among the services, and an increase in the number of senior rates being paid a higher wage. But the circle had not been squared. Comment from the fleet was less than positive. For example, the Flag Officer Atlantic Coast, Rear-Admiral Rollo Mainguy, recognized approvingly that replacement of

specialist and branch pay with "the new pay and rate structure...gave similar pay grades to all branches and acknowledged the fact that each branch had an equivalent responsibility in the efficient functioning of the ship as a fighting unit." Still, he had to report the concerns of many of his senior rates: Seamen transferred into the Electrical Branch when it was established in 1947 but still awaiting trade training were left behind in trade-group pay; Stokers were concerned that they could not advance as high as ERAs; ERAs bemoaned the loss of charge pay, and that non-technical trades now received the same rate of pay as they did; Seamen regretted that there were now more Chief ERAs (a move designed to provide the technical trade some residual advantage), but without the requisite leadership responsibilities or capabilities. There was also some concern over the status of the one truly new rating, Petty Officer 2nd Class. The final reclassification rated it equivalent to the army/air force sergeant, but the navy held it as more closely equivalent in status to the old Leading rate, and in fact had at first proposed a split between Leading rate 1st and 2nd Class, not Petty Officer. The so-called "backbone" of the fleet, the Chiefs and Petty Officers, were the most vociferous complainants. Ominously, the future chairman of the Mainguy Commission predicted in November 1948 and again in mid-February 1949 that, unless Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ) addressed their concerns, there would be trouble in the fleet.⁴⁰



Figure 2: Vice-Admiral Rollo Mainguy sharing a coffee in the Seaman's Mess on board HMCS Athabaskan, 17 February 1953.

Source: Canadian Forces Photographic Unit, PMR 98-132.

Implementation of the new structure began on 1 February, to be effective two weeks later. As most of the new senior rates were to be employed at shore establishments, it was

never intended to have a major impact upon ships' complements, other than some minor adjustments to ensure that all required branch and trade group positions were filled.⁴¹ The temporary increase in the numbers of senior rates in ships would be balanced in short order by the pervasive drafting process. Such was the case with the ships of the East Coast fleet which were, for the most part, alongside in Halifax, and whose experience is best summarized by the commanding officer of the frigate *Swansea*:

Changeover to the new rating structure...was accomplished with a minimum of difficulties and, by dint of much overtime work in the ship's office, it was possible to adjust arrears of pay in time for the February payment. The new structure had caused general satisfaction although it will no doubt be some time before all concerned are familiar with the new titles and, more particularly, their abbreviations, the responsibilities and priveleges [sic] which accompany them. Furthermore, it is thought that it will be a number of years before senior ratings of non-seaman branches will be competent of carrying out general duties compatible with the full meaning of their rate.⁴²

Ships without the luxury of time in port, however, were overwhelmed. HMCS *St. Stephen*, the North Atlantic weather ship, reported that the great many personnel changes "suffered" by the ship's company just before sailing on 7 February meant undertaking "the patrol known to be the most arduous of the year, with fewer experienced personnel on board... [and] combined with sheer bad toss and weather, may account for the fact that the patrol might well be labelled...the 'Breakdown Patrol.'" The West Coast ships quite literally were all at sea for the process, having sailed on their various tasks at the beginning of the month. Their reports, concentrating on operational matters, do not mention the administrative burden created by the new structure. The cruiser *Ontario* and frigate *Antigonish*, with their unique training complements, may not have noticed any undue effects. Yet having to implement the changes away from home port and with the existing ships' companies created a special problem for the two other Canadian ships at sea, the destroyers *Athabaskan* and *Crescent*.

Recent scholarship has firmly placed the Canadian incidents of 1949 in what can be described as "the British naval social tradition" of mutiny. This holds that, contrary to the notion of mutiny popularized by the isolated incident in the *Bounty*, "mutinous acts remain fundamentally loyal to the *status quo* of the service, challenging not social or political systems, but rather demanding conditions of service promised by those systems."⁴⁴ Labour history similarly shows that workers tend to strike not to gain some new right, but to recover something lost or threatened.⁴⁵ The introduction of the new rank structure therefore presented a confusing set of circumstances to the lower deck of the RCN. While included as part of a general package of reform, and in conjunction with a significant pay increase, it nonetheless challenged the established order of life at sea.

A ship's society effectively consists of three classes: a large "working" body of post-adolescent labourers and skilled tradesmen (Leading hands and below), overseen by a relatively well-educated, middle-aged managerial (officer) class; interposed between them is a similarly smaller middle-management class, also middle-aged (Chiefs and Petty Officers). There is a certain mobility among the classes, primarily upward, and based on promotion by merit and time in rank. We have already seen that in *Crescent* the age quotient was on the young side and the general skill level was suspect. The arbitrary implementation

of the new plan temporarily suspended even these tenuous principles. As one of the seamen in *Crescent* later observed, "Many of the new PO2s had not been the best of Leading hands, and now they were lording it over their former messmates."⁴⁶

It would not have been the first time that persons were promoted beyond their level of competence, but the change in complement from the authorized forty-two Chiefs and Petty Officers to a new total of sixty-two, with a commensurate drop in the number of junior ratings from the authorized 150 (peacetime, 196 war) to 125 effectively reduced the number of working deck hands by at least twenty percent. Quite literally, there were suddenly too many chiefs and not enough seamen to perform the myriad shipboard tasks. No one in *Crescent* appearing before the Mainguy Commission made the connection, but that was a major factor in the grievance most frequently cited as having sparked the mutiny: the insufficient number of sentries available to stand watch over the wet canteen and jetty area in Nanking. It is easy to envision a similar set of circumstances attending *Athabaskan's* refuelling – an inherently labour-intensive undertaking – in the primitive surroundings of Manzanillo. (Other evidence suggests that the later, copy-cat incident in *Magnificent* is more properly understood as the result of personal differences between the Executive Officer and the Air Commander.)" With the Chief Petty Officers openly grumbling about the trade-group restructuring, the junior ratings would have felt emboldened to vent their grievances. In circumstances such as these, the degree of effectiveness of their ships' welfare committees – identified by the Commission as the common primary cause of the incidents – could only have been a contributing, not a causal, factor.

For reasons not entirely clear, the restructuring did not loom large in the evidence presented to the Commission; nor did the Commissioners pursue it with any vigour when it occasionally arose in the course of an interview.⁴⁸ Perhaps this was because the restructuring only immediately and personally affected senior Chiefs in a negative fashion; in fact, a clear majority – effectively everyone else rated Leading hand or above, but also including some thirty Able Seamen – had their rates increased and hence benefited materially from the adjustments in back pay to July 1948, not to mention the pay raise effective in October 1948. Perhaps the majority of witnesses and the Commissioners themselves saw the new structure as being in the long-term interests of the navy. Finally, it was ministerial policy to develop tri-service conditions of service, and there could be little advantage in tilting at this particular windmill. The fact remains that it injected an element of turmoil into the navy's traditional rating system at a critical juncture.

A review of the circumstances under which the crew of HMCS *Crescent* eventually left the navy provides a final round of insights into the postwar service. We have already seen how the severe shortage of seamen led the RCN to take extreme measures in delaying demobilization and the release of ratings claiming to have enlisted for hostilities only. With the exit door of "recruitment under false pretences" firmly shut, frustrated men opted for the more extreme measure of buying their way out. Discharge "By Purchase" had been allowed during the interwar years, but was held in abeyance during the war. When it was re-introduced into KRCNs in May 1946, the initial rush of requests prompted NSHQ to respond that "until the Naval Forces are removed from Active Service discharge By Purchase can not, repetition can not, be considered."⁴⁹ Even then, the Naval Staff's consternation at not being able to achieve the authorized Interim Force level of 10,000 men, let alone the ultimate goal of 20,000, led to bizarre situations, such as that reported in January 1947 by the

It is noted at the present time Esquimalt Port Division is in excess of complement 11 Chief Petty Officers [of the Seaman Branch], 102 Petty Officers, 8 Chief Stokers and 46 Stoker Petty Officers...[It] is interesting to note the case of Petty Officer [X, not a *Crescent* crew member] who applied for discharge... but this was not approved by [NSHQ].⁵⁰

Regrettably, the Naval Service files preserved at the National Archives do not include any statistics on the precise number and types of discharges granted through this period, although there are constant references to the high wastage rate, which peaked in 1947, and a continuing debate over the ethics of discharge "By Purchase."⁵¹ From a review of the files of persons serving in *Crescent* in 1949, it is not possible to gauge the success of applications for discharge before that time, other than to note that these same files are littered with refused requests which had been submitted throughout 1947 and 1948. These include cases such as that of sailor #139, which was investigated in May 1947 by one of the newly-created Special Branch Personnel Selection Officers, resulting in a firm recommendation for discharge, based on the conclusion that "this man is not interested in se rvice life...and his depression and disinterest will hinder any satisfactory adjustment to se rvice life."⁵² The application evidently was refused by the NSHQ, in the continuing desperate quest for the grail of the balanced fleet.

Several witnesses from *Crescent* echoed the sentiments expressed by sailor #94 in the following exchange with the Commissioners:

- Q- Anything else?
 A - There's a lot of men that don't seem happy in the service. More in the junior ratings, stokers and seamen, and they are going around moaning all the time, they want to get out.
 Q- You suggest kicking them out?
 A - If they are going around not doing their job let them out. We feel we would be better off without them.⁵³

The Navy appears to have taken the message to heart. Within a year of their return from China, twenty of *Crescent's* crew had been discharged from the service, only one under the unblemished item "Engagement Expired." All the remaining releases still were honourable, but they are illustrative of the descending scale of official approval: two died, one in an off-duty accident, the other of natural causes; another two were granted a "Free Discharge," having sufficiently compassionate reasons of a financial nature to make a buy out inappropriate; ten obtained their release "By Purchase;" another was let go "Services Complete;" two were discharged "Se rvices No Longer Required" ("SNLR"); and a final two were deemed "Unsuitable."⁵⁴ After four years of unwillingness to grant discharges other than under clearly compassionate or strictly legal end-of-contract circumstances, even at the price of retaining the most unsavoury of characters, the navy obviously realized it was time to do some housecleaning. Certainly, as had been promised both at the time of the incidents and again when appearing before the Mainguy Commission, no disciplinary action was taken against anyone involved. Of the twenty cases outlined above, only the latter five releases were instigated by the navy. That did not mean that discharges were readily available, rather that if one had a long conduct sheet (list of service offences) or previously had been labelled

a "troublemaker," then an application was more likely to receive favourable consideration. Indeed, at least two others submitted requests later in 1949 for release that were refused (both of them later re-engaged and eventually retired in the mid-1960s). Nonetheless, the sudden spate of discharges other than at the end of engagement marks a distinct change in thinking on the part of the naval establishment.

The initial bloodletting completed, the range of discharge items narrowed considerably. After mid-1950, there was only one more first-engagement discharge "By Purchase" (in 1952), although two later sought these in the course of their second five-year engagements. Rather, there was a steady stream of sixty "Engagement Expired" releases through the early 1950s, most as the postwar entries completed their five-year terms. Of these, three returned within a year or two to the navy, and the army attracted another three, while eleven subsequently joined the air force.⁵⁵ Most of the crew, however, spent the next two decades providing valuable service to the navy. Many ended their careers as Chief Petty Officers and several accepted commissions. The last retired in 1979.

For *Crescent*, the incident of 15 March proved cathartic. It seems that the gravity of what had transpired worked in combination with the continuing absence from home port to bring the crew together, not unlike squabbling children being locked in a room and not allowed to come out until things are settled. With only a few exceptions, all members of the ship's company appearing before the Commission reported a marked improvement in shipboard relations during the remaining three months of the cruise. Familiarity bred not contempt, but mutual confidence. Nor was this a short-lived affair. Something about the experience marked these men in such a positive fashion that in the past decade large numbers of them have met twice for reunions.⁵⁶

Perhaps it is fitting to end on that positive note. In the study of history the watchword should always be "context is everything." At times this analysis of the lower-deck complement of an RCN destroyer in the immediate postwar years – and more uniquely, the actual state of one that mutinied in March 1949 – has painted a dismal portrait. The statistics and examples drawn from fifty-year-old files provide new insights into the some of the navy's structural problems which ultimately contributed to the mutinies. But sight should never be lost of the simple truth that these facts and figures were all derived in the context of ordinary men going about the business of service to their country in extraordinary times.

NOTES

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1. *Report on Certain "Incidents" which Occurred on Board HMC Ships Athabaskan. Crescent and Magnificent and on Other Matters Concerning the Royal Canadian Navy* (Ottawa, 1949) (*Mainguy Report*).

2. Tony German, *The Sea is at Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy* (Toronto, 1990), 211.

3. *The King's Regulations for the Government of His Majesty's Canadian Naval Service (KRCNs)* (Ottawa, 1945), article 1.02 (xv) provides that "'division' of a ship or fleet establishment refers to the sections into which men serving in the ship or fleet establishment may be divided for purposes of discipline and to facilitate the training and welfare of the men."

4. As ordered by Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ), CANGEN 54, 281445Z/July/1947, reproduced in *Mainguy Report*, 26.

5. *Mainguy Report*, 7. The only surviving copy of the testimony is preserved in National Archives

of Canada (NAC), Manuscript Group (MG) 31, E18, Louis Audette Papers, vols. 12-15.

6. William H. Pugsley, *Saints, Devils and Ordinary Seamen* (Toronto, 1945); Pugsley, *Return to Sea* (Toronto, 1960); Hal Lawrence, *A Bloody War* (Toronto, 1979); Lawrence, *Tales of the North Atlantic* (Toronto, 1985); James B. Lamb, *The Corvette Navy* (Toronto, 1977); and Lamb, *The Triangle Run* (Toronto, 1986).

7. L.C. Audette, "The Lower Deck and the Mainguy Report of 1949," in J.A. Boutilier (ed.), *The RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968* (Vancouver, 1982), 235-249. This theme is explored further in William Glover, "The RCN: Royal Colonial or Royal Canadian Navy?" in Michael L. Hadley, Rob Huebert and Fred W. Crickard (eds.), *A Nation's Navy: In Quest of Canadian Naval Identity* (Montréal, 1996), 71-90. Audette (one of the original Commissioners) and Glover (a serving naval officer) did Canadian naval historiography a great service in sparking open debate of this theme. As correct as they may be, however, the purposefully narrow focus of their papers belies the complexity of the issue and fed the controversy.

8. *Mainguy Report*, 7-8.

9. David Zimmerman, "The Social Background of the Wartime Navy: Some Statistical Data," in Hadley, Huebert and Crickard (eds.), *A Nation's Navy*, 256-279. The pejorative nicknames are derived from the style of officers' gold rank braid.

10. National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ), Department of History and Heritage (DHH) Narrative No. 9A (December 1998), Robert H. Caldwell, "Morale and Discipline in the Canadian Naval Service in the Second World War;" and Caldwell, "The VE Day Riots in Halifax, 7-8 May 1945," *The Northern Mariner/Le Marin du nord*, forthcoming.

11. Peter Archambault, "Mutiny and the Imperial Tradition: The Canadian Naval Mutinies of 1949 and the Experience of Mutiny in the Royal Navy" (Unpublished MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1992), iii, argues that "the RCN mutinies of 1949 were similar in character to those of the Royal Navy."

12. *The Canadian Navy List: Containing List of Ships, Establishments and Officers of the Fleet* (Ottawa, various dates). Promulgated at six-month intervals, these volumes identified all serving

officers, categorizing them by affiliation, with cross-indexing by position held, seniority and branch.

13. Obtained from the private holding of CPO (ret'd) Jim Tyre, *Crescent* Reunion Committee, Victoria, BC, 9 October 1997.

14. The Privacy Act allows open use of information of persons dead more than twenty years, such as, for example, *Crescent's* captain, then-Lieutenant-Commander David Groos. Otherwise, where references to individual ratings may be required, the database has been re-arranged in a numerical order to preserve anonymity. This has been cross-referenced to the Mainguy Commission testimony. The database will be placed on deposit, with restrictions, at DHH.

15. NAC, Record Group (RG) 24, Acc. 83-84/167, box 129, file 1279-22, "Minutes of the 72nd Meeting of the Complement Committee: 72-1, Complement – *Crescent* Class Destroyer," 28 October 1946.

16. NAC, MG 31, E18, Audette Papers, vols. 13-12 and 14-1, "Testimony *Crescent*," June 1949.

17. F.H. Leacy (ed.), *Historical Statistics of Canada* (2nd ed., Ottawa, 1983).

18. NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, box 129, file 1279-22, Complement Committee, A/CNP memorandum, 2 December 1948, identified some 739 positions for the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS), nearly half the then-existing personnel shortfall.

19. NDHQ, DHH, NSS 4000/100/14, PC 4950, 30 June 1944; and NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, box 1624, file 4600-1, Recruiting and Enrolment – General, vol. 2, "Extract from the 34th Meeting of the Cabinet Defence Committee, 28 May 1947," with covering minutes.

20. One of the officers embarked for *Crescent's* cruise to China was Lt. (SB) Bill Lore, one of the few officers of Chinese-Canadian extraction. Being proficient in both Cantonese and Mandarin, he had joined the Royal Canadian Volunteer Reserve (RCNVR) and served with the British Far Eastern Fleet as an interpreter during the war. Although now borne for the same purposes, it had not occurred to any of the Eurocentric officers in NSHQ that neither of these dialects were commonly spoken in the Shanghai region (*Crescent's* destina-

tion), and Lore's services were not as valuable as hoped. See NDHQ, DHH, BIOG/L, LCdr(SB) (ret'd) William K. Lore, "The *Crescent* Episode, 1949," unpublished manuscript, 3.

21. NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, Box 1596, file 4490-1, "Morale & Service Conditions - General," memorandum from Officer in Charge Seamen Personnel to DCNP, 11 August 1947; and *Report of the Department of National Defence for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1949 (DND Annual Report)* (Ottawa, 1949), 16 and 83.

22. Doug Owrarn, "Canadian Domesticity in the Postwar Era," in Peter Neary and J.L. Granatstein (eds.), *The Veterans Charter and Post-World War II Canada* (Montréal, 1998), 210-215; and *DND Annual Reports, 1950 and 1951*.

23. *KRCN*, article 70.50(1); NAC, MG 31, E18, Audette Papers, vol. 13-12, 1597; NAC, Personnel Records Centre (PRC), Personnel File Sailor #147, Marriage Allowance Certificate, 1 August 1949; NAC, MG 31, E18, Audette Papers, vol. 13-12, 1503-1504; NDHQ, DHH, NSS 4000-100/14, [Personnel] Policy, minute to file quoting "Speech (radio) of Mr. Brooke Claxton;" DNInf press release 545 HQ, 30 September 1947; and NAC, PRC, Personnel File Sailor #66, "Findings and Decision of Discharge Board," 10 August 1949.

24. Marc Milner, *North Atlantic Run: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Battle for the Convoys* (Toronto, 1985); Roger Sarty, *Canada and the Battle of the Atlantic* (Montréal, 1998); and Neary and Granatstein (eds.), *The Veterans Charter*.

25. NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, Box 610, file 1818-3, vol. 1, D of P to CNS, 23 July 1945; NAC, RG 24, 83-84/167, box 455, file 1650-26, part 1, D of P to CNS, "Conversations with Admiralty concerning Carriers and Destroyers," 6 September 1945, *ibid.*, DNP&I to DCNS, "Planning of Post-war Navy," 14 March 1947; and *DND Annual Report, 1947, 18*.

26. NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, box 455, file 1650-26, Employment of Canadian Naval Forces, Part I, DoP to Naval Staff, "Manning Priority - Seagoing Units," 27 December 1945. This memorandum predicted that, assuming a strength of 6600 on 1 April 1946 and a quarterly intake thereafter of 1500 men, less discharges, the RCN would be at full complement by 1 January 1947. Although the precise intake and discharge figures for each quarter cannot be determined, NSHQ

301828Z/Mar/46, still noted that "[i]n view of the favourable recruiting situation since the beginning of the year it will be possible to advance the estimated manning schedule."

27. NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, box 1457, file 4240-12, "Discharges Procedure, RCN," CNAS to Minister, 13 April 1946, and file *passim.*; and CO Warrior to Naval Secretary, 11 June 1946.

28. NAC, RG 24, 83-84/167, box 1596, file 4490-1, vol. 1, *passim.* As an aside, it is interesting to note that the resulting report noted virtually every failing and recommendation which would later appear in the *Mainguy Report. Ibid.*, VCNS to CNS, "The Morale of the Navy," 29 September 1947; and CNS to Minister, 8 October 1947.

29. NAC, MG 31, E18, Audette Papers, vol. 13-2, "Report from Sea. Written on Passage from Esquimalt to Shanghai in February, 1949," attached to Groos to Audette, 15 April 1949; and covering letter, Groos to Audette, 15 April 1949.

30. Interview, Cdr (L) (ret'd) Hal Smith, Canadian Naval Technical History Project, Ottawa, 25 March 1998; Tyre interview, Victoria, BC, 21 June 1998; NAC, RG 24, 8402, HMCS *Crescent*, Ship's Logs, February-March 1949; and Interview, Cdr (ret'd) Peter Birch-Jones, Victoria, BC, 22 June 1990.

31. NAC, RG 24, vol. 11,388, DCT 9900-358/36, HMCS *Crescent*, "Report of Proceedings [for August 1946]," 6 September 1946.

32. NAC, MG 31, E18, Audette Papers, vol. 13 *passim.*; and Tyre interview, 9 October 1997.

33. Thor Thorgrimsson and E.C. Russell, *Canadian Naval Operations in Korean Waters, 1950-1955* (Ottawa, 1965), the official history, certainly provides a good basis in recounting the various operations undertaken and highlighting the breadth of experience gained. A more candid view is provided by Edward C. Meyers, *Thunder in the Morning Calm: The Royal Canadian Navy in Korea, 1950-1955* (St. Catharines, ON, 1991), which describes a navy going through a series of trials that make the grievances of 1949 pale in comparison. The wonder is that, but for the cathartic experience of 1949, would that navy have mutinied?

34. *Crowsnest*, I, No. 2 (December 1948), 14-15.

35. David Jay Bercuson, *True Patriot: The Life of Brooke Claxton, 1898-1960* (Toronto, 1992), 159ff.
36. NAC, RG 24, vol. 8091, file 1279-17, Committee on Advancement & Conditions in the Naval Service – New Substantive Rating Structure, 1948-49 (Peers Committee), "Minutes of the Third Meeting....," 24 February 1948; and "Interim Report [# 1]," 1 March 1948, which determined the following average monthly pay under the conditions then in force:
- | Service | Pay of Rank | Trades Pay | Total |
|-----------|-------------|------------|---------|
| Navy | \$76.60 | \$ 8.53 | \$87.13 |
| Army | 70.46 | 12.66 | 92.12 |
| Air Force | 78.77 | 18.94 | 97.72 |
37. *Ibid.*, MND to Governor General in Council, 28 June 1948.
38. *Ibid.*, "Minutes of the Second Meeting....," 20 February 1948.
39. *Ibid.*, MND to Governor General-in-Council, 28 June 1948, appendix A. For the new rates of pay, see *DND Annual Report, 1949*, table 4.
40. NAC, RG 24, vol. 8091, NSS 1279-17, FOAC to Naval Secretary, 27 January 1949, and file, *passim.*; *Crowsnest*, I, No. 2 (December 1948), 14-15; file 1279-17, extract of Naval Board Minute 246-1, 29 April 1948; and NDHQ, DHH, NSS 1279-17, FOAC [Mainguy] to Naval Secretary, 1 November 1948 and 17 February 1949.
41. NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/ 167, box 129, file 1279-22, Complement Committee Minute 107-18, 6 May 1948. It appears that none of the complements were formally reconfigured as a result of the restructuring. *Crescent's*, however, was re-established after it was rebuilt and modernized to *Algonquin-c* lass destroyer escort standard. See *ibid.*, vol. 7, minute 260-1, 16 September 1954.
42. DHH, 8000-*Swansea*, "Report of Proceedings [for February 1949]," 7 March 1949.
43. DHH, 8000-St. *Stephen*, "Report of Proceedings [for February 1949]," 9 March 1949.
44. Archambault, "Mutiny," ii.
45. The Canadian Seaman's Union (CSU) through 1946-1949 fought a series of strikes against efforts of the shipping companies to break the union. See William Kaplan, *Everything that Floats: Pat Sullivan, Hal Banks, and the Canadian Seaman's Union* (Toronto, 1987); and Jim Green, *Against the Tide: The Story of the Canadian Seaman's Union* (Toronto, 1986).
46. Tyre interview, 9 October 1997.
47. Peter Birch-Jones, "HMCS *Crescent*: The China Expedition of 1949 and the Two-hour Mutiny in Nanking," *Resolution*, No. 24 (Fall 1991), 13-19; and NAC, MG 31, E18, Audette Papers, vols. 13-6 to 13-8, "Testimony *Magnificent*," *passim*.
48. See, for example, *ibid.*, vol. 13-12, "Testimony – *Crescent*," 1759.
49. *KRCN*, article 7.84, determined the amount to be \$100 up to and including three months from entry or re-engagement, and after that time \$2.50 for each unexpired month of the engagement. See also NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, box 1457, file 4240-17, Discharge Categories, NSHQ message "197S", 091854Z/May/1946.
50. NAC, RG 24, Acc. 83-84/167, box 1454, file 4240-1, Discharges, Demobilization and Rehabilitation - General, O-i-C RCN Sub-Depot Esquimalt to COPC, 17 January 1947.
51. *Ibid.*, and file 4240-17, *passim*.
52. NAC, PRC, Personnel file, sailor #169.
53. NAC, MG 31, E18, Audette Papers, vol. 13-12, "Testimony *Crescent*," 1898.
54. See *KRCN*, article 7.80 (table) for description of discharge items.
55. Interview, Corporal (RCAF, ret'd) Frederick Gimblett, Oshawa, Ontario, various dates. Gimblett, who joined the air force in 1950, confirms this trend, recalling that he served at various times with a large number of ex-navy personnel.
56. NAC, MG 31, E18, Audette Papers, vols. 13-12 and 14-1, "Testimony *Crescent*," *passim.*; and Tyre interview, 9 October 1997.