

## HMCS Gatineau NATO 1988

The following is a recollection of my observations while deployed on HMCS Gatineau during NATO 88.

Using a Commodore 128 rig setup in the after VDS compartment each night during the Dog Watches I would sit and jot down what I had experienced or observed.

This composition in two parts is provided in the hope that 1, it will offer shipmates some memories and to say, "Yes, I was there!" 2, to all the others who have sailed on similar deployments I hope they can see their own experiences in these pages and 3, to those who have never sailed and may be curious about what we do when we sail over the horizon I sincerely hope these recollections offer some insight into the business of the navy.

Yours Aye,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phil Miller".

Phil Miller  
Ottawa  
March 2020

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DAY 1 Monday July 11

The air stood calm on that Monday. What morning mist there was was threatened by the warm rising sun under a blanket of blue sky. It was in all respects a perfect day for a ship to proceed to sea.

And indeed on this day, one lone ship was readying herself for an extended deployment that would see her to the shores of Europe and beyond. Where her wake would stir not the familiar waters of the North Atlantic or the Caribbean, but the cold choppy waters of the North Sea and the Baltic.

It was this ship's turn to take up her country's banner in the Standing Naval Force Atlantic. That squadron of ships assembled year round to demonstrate the solidarity and cohesiveness of the NATO alliance. And she would uphold that emblem, that symbol of pride for nearly half a year.

And then, her storerooms filled to capacity with every conceivable spare, her technicians checking their equipment one last time, the engineering personnel standing by the fires, her seamen at their posts, the GATINEAU began, slowly at first, to make her way out of the harbour. Months of intricate planning and deliberate preparation had finally come to this moment. Where she would become alone and cutoff from her source of supplies and material.

And what of the families, loved ones and sweethearts left behind? What sort of planning and preparation does one provide when departing for nearly six months? These are difficult questions indeed and may never be answered. But it is a duty that calls and must be answered.

Slicing easily through the persistent morning fog, the GATINEAU set her compass on an easterly course, thus commencing the longest deployment of her brief but yet remarkable East Coast posting.

What lay ahead of her now her crew could only guess, but whatever she was about to face, she would face it with stern determination and a strong will and desire to see it through. For those are attributes that constitute a ship who is a member of the Standing Naval Force Atlantic.

DAY 2, Tuesday July 12

The second day grew long and quiet as GATINEAU found herself in a tremendously thick fog. Having been in it since her departure she was well accustomed to the routine of sailing in such conditions. Only occasionally was the silence broken by the routine sounding of the fog signals.

The day did not pass without some drills however. GATINEAU exercised her bomb threat organization. And the ordinary seamen underwent some lectures.

It was in this manner that the GATINEAU trekked onwards to St. John's and beyond.

DAY 3

Port visit / fuel stop in St. John's Newfoundland.

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DAY 4

GATINEAU slipped at 1015 local time, enroute for Portsmouth England in unusually cold weather. Course - 070 degrees; speed 13 knots. Seas calm, sky overcast.

DAY 5

Tracking onwards, the GATINEAU proceeded to her destination under clearing skies and a fresh south-easterly breeze. Course - 080 degrees; speed - 013 knots.

DAY 6, Saturday, July 16

Saturday arrived with strong winds that forced the closing of the upper decks. R.A.S. manning checks were postponed to a later date to be announced. The winds abated in the early afternoon, only to give way to a very dense fog. The captain carried out formal rounds of messdecks and flats. Our course and speed: 085 at 15 knots.

DAY 7, Sunday July 17

Steadily progressing towards Portsmouth, GATINEAU plodded onwards. Today we exercised rigging for tows for'd and aft with both watches. The weather remained warm yet blanketed us with a heavy fog. Winds were light from the south, seas 4-6 feet, temperature 18 C. Our course, 085 degrees at 14 knots.

DAY 8, Monday July 18

Blessed with a calm sea the GATINEAU carried on towards her rendezvous with the NATO squadron. The omnipresent fog had finally abated, allowing us to cease our deafening fog horns.

With the improved visibility our gun crews managed to fit in an initial velocity trial on the 3"70.

The weather remained warm with the wind now on our starboard quarter at about 13 knots. Seas 4 - 6 feet. Cloud cover remains overcast but opportunities did allow the bridge to get a sun fix. Our course, a 090 at 14 knots.

DAY 9, Tuesday July 19

Just two days remain between Gatineau and Portsmouth. The weather remains overcast but dry. Previously postponed RAS manning checks were carried out for both watches for jackstays, fuelling, and kingposts. As well, the weather permitted the crew to get in a good scrubdown of the upperdeck.

Weather-fair, seas calm. Course 095 at 12 knots.

DAY 10, Wednesday July 20

Finally on our last day out the sun comes out in all it's brilliance. It was just a beautiful day. The wind was

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negligible except for that produced by the ship's momentum, the seas all but still, and the temperature was reminiscent of the Caribbean.

The weather allowed many to observe the English Channel in all it's daily hustle. Sailboats by the tens, fishing boats, freighters and tankers both. All contributing to make the channel one of the busiest waterways in the world.

One particular ship however was of as immense interest to us as we were of it. A Soviet AGI, (Intelligence Gatherer), Atlantic bound, turned to trail us for several miles at a distance of 600 yards, surveilling us electronically with her vast arrays of antennae. She had probably never seen a Canadian IRE before since we had just transferred last April.

Anyway, we left her far behind as we began our final approach to Portsmouth. Our course now @ 085 at 12 knots.

DAY 11, Thursday July 21

At 0915, Thursday July 21 under overcast skies, HMCS GATINEAU arrived in Portsmouth England to assume her position in the NATO Squadron. Once alongside, the Fall '88 edition of the squadron was now complete.

Inboard of GATINEAU was the FSP COMMANDANTE SANDORA CABRAL, from Portugal. And inboard of her rested the HMS PHOEBE. Situated directly ahead also in a nest of three were the USS HAYLER, FGS KOLN and the HNoLMS A. CRIJJENSEN.

At 1030 GATINEAU was addressed by the commander of SNFL, Rear Admiral REDD, USN on the quarterdeck. In his address, he welcomed GATINEAU to the squadron and told us what he expected of us, and what we might expect for in the following months.

After the address the true business of swapping with SKEENA began in earnest. Publications, pieces of equipment, records and such all had to be transferred to GATINEAU. As well, SKEENA was to take some material from GATINEAU back to Halifax bound for the shops in dockyard. Today was the only day as SKEENA would be leaving early the following morning.

In the early afternoon, GATINEAU hosted a capabilities briefing onboard, so as to allow the SNFL command to gain an appreciation of GATINEAU's strengths and weaknesses.

At 1600 the brow was opened and many GATINEAU's went ashore. At long last, NATO had begun indeed!

DAY 12, Friday July 22

Port visit: Portsmouth England.

DAY 13, Saturday July 23

Port visit: Portsmouth England.

DAY 14, Sunday July 24

Port visit: Portsmouth England.

DAY 15, Monday July 25

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At 0800 GATINEAU led the NATO squadron out of Portsmouth enroute to workups in the western approaches to the English Channel. The day began overcast and breezy and threatened to work its way into a full gale but presently the winds and sea are both quite calm, although the sky remains cloudy.

Throughout the day the squadron practiced formations as well as some basic ASW tracking exercises. The next few days should be the same as well as gunex's and adex's etc.

Today marked the first day of the new squadron configuration. Gone is the Canadian ship SKEENA, replaced by ourselves and HMS PENOLOPE replaces HMS PHOEBE. Over the next few months I'm sure we'll become quite familiar with each other.

DAY 16, Tuesday July 26

Another beautiful warm day in the English Channel. We practised more ship handling amongst the squadron and carried out some air defense exercises against the RAF.

This morning we performed a light Jackstay with the german ship KOLN. Her methods are similar to ours except that her bosn passes all commands by means of a bosn's call rather than by voice like as we do. And it gave both parties a chance to see the other close up while underway.

The squadron goes to anchor this evening at midnight in Sandbay, where we will spend the night. Tomorrow we will weigh anchor and proceed to sea to do it all over again.

DAY 17, Wednesday, July 27

Overcast and windy, that's the way it was today although the seas stayed relatively calm, ie. 4-6 feet. We weighed anchor this morning at 0700 and headed out into the channel for more exercises. Sandown Bay seems like a pretty uninteresting place except that it has one cliff reminiscent of the cliffs of Dover.

We managed to fire the gun today and apparently it was a success by all accounts. The guns crew celebrated with a debrief and cokes in the SCR.

Just another day.

DAY 18, Thursday, July 28

Today began with the same cloud cover as yesterday as well as the same winds. Seas 4-6 feet mercifully.

Fired off the anti-submarine mortars this afternoon in consort with the Portugese CABRAL. As well we fuelled with one of the Royal Fleet Auxilliary vessels early this evening. They're actually manned with civilian personnel but fall under the auspices of the Royal Navy.

Some more squadron manouevring took place as well as a mock war with the RAF and a pretend submarine. It was part of the RN's weekly war in which all the ships in a certain port put to sea for a forenoon to engage all 3 enemy platforms. We

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protected two RN amphibious craft for this exercise.

Just a few more days remain before we commence our transit to Aarhus Denmark.

DAY 19, Friday, July 29

The day began clear and bright, GATINEAU and her consorts just off the Isle of Wight. The day ended clear and bright, GATINEAU and her consorts still off the Isle of Wight.

DAY 20, Saturday, July 30

Today was another uneventful day in the newly formed squadrons itinerary.

Again the weather stayed nice with lots of sunshine and brisk westerlies. The ships practiced OOW manoeuvres once again.

This afternoon at 1600 the squadron anchored at Sand Bay for the weekend. Our cable didn't take the first time so we were forced to weigh anchor and attempt it once more. It took hold on the second try.

Once anchored, the ship held it's NATO song auditions whereby the winner would get a chance to serenade the other ships in Aarhus Denmark. One extra benefit to the winner; dinner served to him in the main cafeteria by the XO and the coxswain.

DAY 21, Sunday, July 31

Day 21 began with the squadron remaining at anchor in Sandown Bay. The current had reversed itself and now pointed us to the west. An interesting thing to note about the currents in the channel, they are indeed swift and can reach up to three knots in some areas. It is not the wind dictates which way a ship will face while swinging at her cable.

In the afternoon we held our first bazaar of the trip on the quarterdeck. Ofcourse all the trimmings were present including steaks grilled on gas barbecues, salads, arrays of freshly sliced vegetables, baked potatoes, and freshly baked bread. And there were the odd assortment of individuals who wore 'loud' clothing to the event.

SNFL held it's song contest over the radio, with each ship taking her turn at broadcasting. CSNFL was the judge and chose the Germans followed by the Dutch. It was quite interesting to hear the other entries as all were sung in unison.

DAY 22, Monday, August 1

Our fourth week began with the SNFL weighing anchor at first light and proceeding in formation to Aarhus Denmark. The sky was alive with shades of red as the sun rose in the east, casting down it's first rays as it crested the horizon. The channel was as smooth as a baby's bum as the squadron proceeded out of the bay.

One sad point about the departure was the Dutch ship A. Crijjensen. She snapped her cable while weighing and lost her

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anchor, injuring one man in the process. She med-evacued him on her helicopter but fell behind the remainder as a result. Just another example of how even routine evolutions can be extremely dangerous if not careful.

After a short RAS with an RFA tanker, SNFL headed eastward and onward.

The English Channel is indeed a very busy thoroughfare in the sealanes of Europe. At any one time one could count a least 10 to 15 contacts visually. These vary from small sailboats to enormous crude oil carriers and everything inbetween.

We passed close enough to catch a glimpse of Bourgogne France though only at a distance. The haze was up a bit and prevented us from seeing the white cliffs of Dover unfortunately.

DAY 23, Tuesday, August 2

Dawn found us forty miles off the coast of Holland heading in a northerly direction. The weather remained absolutely perfect.

In the afternoon we had a air defense exercise with aircraft from the German airforce attacking. They used F-16 and F-5 fighter aircraft in their simulated strafing runs. At times they flew at sea level, only to skip over a ship at the last moment creating a deafening roar both outside the ship as well as in.

The Cabral departed for a time for what reasons I don't know, but that put the SNFL at an effective strength of 4 vice 6 as it should be.

We performed our first cross-pol receiving 4 Germans onboard till Thursday.

DAY 24, Wednesday, August 3

At last some cloud cover to speak of as well as some rain showers. And the sea even picked up to 2-4 feet. But there was still plenty of sunshine to go around. Not a very busy day for the Force. I anticipate many of our transits will be as such with little else going on except for transitting and so forth.

The Cabral rejoined early this morning and now we are five once again.

DAY 25, Thursday, August 4

One day out of Aahrus and the weather turned bleak once again. The seas picked up to 6 feet but that didn't prevent several of the ships from performing another crosspol this afternoon. We crossed with the American ship Hagler.

As well this afternoon we partook in yet another ADEX with planes from the German Airforce once again running attacks on the force.

Also we practised a vertrep (vertical replenishment) with the German helo from the Koeln. Just another example of inter-operability between units.

DAY 26, Friday, August 5

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This day began at 0315 with the force receiving a SOS from a sailboat in our area. Originally thinking that there were five people in the water the force scanned the area with searchlights aided by other ships in the area. The Hayler fished one person out alive and he indicated that he was indeed the only person on the boat at the time of it's capsizing. So having secured the search, the force proceeded enroute Aarhus.

The approach to Aarhus is certainly not short by any means. Special sea duty men closed up at 0430 for a planned arrival at 1100. The reason being the narrowness of the channel. Many islands dot the approach to the coast, hence mariners must exercise caution when transiting the shallow channel.

Our entrance was delayed one hour and a half because there was only one pilot and two tugs, both required due to the high winds that accompanied us and the entrance to Aarhus harbour due to it's breakwater is only 150 feet wide. And being the last in line didn't help much either.

Our berth was situated right in the heart of downtown Aarhus and this made walking the order of the day. The first striking difference to many was the architecture, it being typically Danish as compared to what we were used to back home.

Aarhus itself is a beautiful port city situated on the east coast of Denmark. It is home to more than 250,000 people making it the second largest city in that country. It's founders were those in the Viking profession over a thousand years ago and there are still many traces of Viking heriatge present in Aarhus. Aarhus is certainly not a new city as is evidenced by the narrow streets and old buildings that line them. The people in Denmark are friendly and made the force welcome. In short, Aarhus typifies ones image of Denmark.

DAY 27, Saturday, August 6

Port visit: Aarhus

DAY 28, Sunday, August 7

Port visit: Aarhus

DAY 29, Monday, August 8

Port visit: Aarhus

DAY 30, Tuesday, August 9

At 1330 Gatineau in company with the remainder of the force set sail for the Baltic, leaving Aarhus behind in the distance. The weather was simply perfect and made transiting the busy narrows easier.

The transit was marked once again with islands, some large some small. And many pleasure craft to boot. It was almost reminiscent of a cruise on a liner, with the warm sun, the glass-like water, the islands passing close by.

As the day progressed the force continued on it's way into the Baltic.

DAY 31, Wednesday, August 10

Another clean and smooth day in the crowded Baltic. The sky

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was clear and the seas remained as calm as can be imagined.

As daylight broke over the horizon we could finally identify visually the Warsaw Pact ships that had trailed us for most of the night. They proved to be two East German patrol boats and one East German landing craft as well as an AGI (Intel. gatherer.) Also we met up with a Danish patrol boat squadron (6) who would be working with us over the next while or so. It was interesting to see so many ships from different countries all in one area seemingly doing nothing for the time being.

But as the day progressed the force did another cross pol, this time with a Danish FPB. Two actually came and tied up alongside as we transferred the four people across.

This afternoon we performed manouevres with the German and a Danish frigate and were overflowed by a Soviet built MIG several times at close range, he obviously being interested in hull number identification.

Tonight we performed yet another cross pol, returning the several we had and receiving two women, one officer and one rating. They intend to spend the night, safely in the sickbay of course.

The premier issue of the Gatineau Gazette was distributed today and received a favorable response. As the crew will get a chance to input material, I'm sure it will become a success in it's own right.

One full month has passed so far and the company remains in optimistic spirits. That leaves 126 days remaining with about 51 to be spent alongside in the various ports of call. The weather has made a difference in that the crew still seems rested in a way. The workload has certainly not been in the calibre of heavy as of yet but several upcoming exercises will put it there. But for now, Gatineau sails stalwartly onwards.

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DAY 32, Thursday, August 11

What started out as a nice day turned overcast this afternoon yet the winds remained almost nil and the seas mirror smooth.

Earlier this morning we did a vertrep with the Hayler's sea king helicopter who ferried mail for the CSNFL. And just after, we returned the Dutch females to the Crijenssen.

At noon we RAS'ed with a German tanker with a NATO B coupling. It all went well except at the end when the last lines were slipped, his lines got tangled amongst themselves leaving lines dangling from the top of the fuelling position.

At the same time, and after while we did yet another ADEX, two WP patrol boat as well as aircraft kept tallies on our operations and what we were up to.

For the second day in a row, our gun crews shot down a sleeve target during a GUNEX. The sleeve measures approximately 30 feet by 2 feet and is towed 5000 feet behind an aircraft. It contains electronics inside to determine the proximity of nearby projectiles and in this way hits or misses can be determined by sensors onboard the aircraft. The object is not to shoot the target down but only to come near (50 ft.). High

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explosives rounds aren't used of course as are rounds filled with lead to merely simulate the weight of a real projectile. Therefore it can be clearly shown that the gun/radar alignment is deadly accurate. As well, the gun crews themselves deserve a fair share of the credit.

Our knocking the sleeve down impelled us to refrain from firing at the plane's other target as we allowed our two consorts Koeln and Olford to exercise their crews.

DAY 33, Friday, August 12

The seas picked up today to a mountainous height of 2 feet providing Gatineau with a sensation, albeit small, that she hadn't felt in a long time; that of rolling to a swell.

The only highlight of the day was when we towed the Danish frigate Olford and her making approaches on us.

The only WP fella around was one small Polish minesweeper who seemed mildly interested in our TOWEX and closed to within 1 mile at times.

DAY 34, Saturday, August 13

Today marked the roughest day yet of our European Sojourn. The seas swelled to a marked high of 8 feet which accompanied with high winds precluded us from having our second Banyan on the quarterdeck.

So in it's place Gatineau sailed alone in a area approximately 20 miles long doing nothing but steaming at slow speeds so as not to cause too much roll etc.

And that was the extent of our thirty fourth day away from home.

DAY 35, Sunday, August 14

So after a rough Saturday, the weather returned to it's usual self, settling in with calm seas, light winds, and sunshine.

The highlight of this day had to be the sighting by the Force of two Soviet ships, one Sovremmny cruiser and one Udaloy destroyer. We turned in formation at a high rate of knots in order to close so that we might shadow. At the five mile mark Gatineau received a signal from flag to proceed to the next serial rendezvous position which was about fourty miles away. So that in effect prevented us from getting any closer.

Actually it might have been for the best. Given the relatively balmy conditions, we wasted no time in organizing our second banyan of NATO. What might the Russians have thought had they seen the Canadians in their antique ships, dressed in beach wear, grilling steaks over gas barbecues while sipping a cool one.

DAY 36, Monday, August 15

With the weekend behind us the Force finally set into the business at hand. We all fulled with the German tanker

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Afterwards we partook in yet another adex with the Danish and German airforces taking their runs at us.

The later part of the day saw us make our deepest penetration yet into the Baltic as we positioned ourselves for a casex (submarine exercise). This took us to the east of Sweden whereas we had normally stayed to the south of Sweden. It all looked the same though. We never came close to the coast as Sweden is not a member of the alliance.

As well we were trepped with the Dutch who embarked two female officers. This time their stay would be longer.

The friendly Baltic blessed us with yet another beautiful day in which to fulfill all these tasks and more besides.

DAY 37, Tuesday, August 16

Seas 3-4 feet, winds high, skys partly cloudy: That's the way this day started.

Not a very busy day overall. We did a light jackstay with the Dutch for training purposes, passing people over only to retrieve them minutes later.

Here in the Baltic dumping gash over the side is strictly forbidden. Therefore ships engaging in exercises must store their refuse onboard to be dumped at a later date. In our case that later date came today. A little patrol boat tied up alongside and we passed down our hundred or so bags of garbage. This was the second time since sailing from Arhus that we had an opportunity to dump and it wasn't a moment too soon. We can comfortably hold our gash for two days after which bins set up on the quarterdeck for that purpose are full and with the exception of galley and cafeteria all departments are required to hold their gash in their spaces.

Several more casex's kept the sonarmen busy for most of the day.

DAY 38, Wednesday, August 17

Seas 4-5 feet, winds high, mostly cloudy.

Today the second issue of the Gatineau Gazette made it appearance in fine style. From a mere 8 pages (4 sheets) in the first issue to an overwhelming 20 pages today, the Gazette seems to have found a niche onboard the ship bearing it's name.

Another casex or two to pass the time as well as a gunex yet this time it was against a towed surface tgt. We came awfully close if in fact we didn't hit it.

A quiet day.

DAY 39, Thursday, August 18

Weighing anchor at 1400 under sunny skys and smooth seas, the Force readied itself for one more serial before transitting to Kiel. One that would leave only memories in the men who sailed in SNFL.

Today was a day of farewells and goodbyes as Cabral and Kohn both bid the remainder of the Force adieu as their time

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in SNFL had come to an end. And in keeping with NATO traditions, they both performed admirably in their sailpast salutes to their former colleagues-in-arms.

Their upper decks covered with an assortment of pyrotechnic devices, posters, firehoses, and such, both ships gained the appearance of something other than that for which they had been designed. Their uppers manned by practically the entire crew, first the Kolin followed closely by the Cabral made their way up the Force's starboard side in one last wave of farewell. The rest of us also manned our railing to wave goodbye.

Some of the highlights of the day were the caped figure riding his bike while suspended 20M beneath the Dutch helo, the Kolin's potatoe slingshot; after several ranging shots she finally found the mark...twice!, Cabral's hearty cheers and the swimming pool they had fabricated on the quarterdeck.

After the sailpast the Force proceeded enroute Kiel, Germany.

DAY 40, Friday, August 19

Another port. Today Kiel, Germany, capital city of the northern state of Schelisweig Holstein. A bustling city of 220,000 situated on the Baltic coast, Kiel is internationally reknown for her ship building and thrives on buisness related to the sea. It is also the pivot of the famous Kiel Kanal which sees 90,000 ships pass through it's locks annually. The people are friendly and modest, an attribute common to all people who deal with the sea.

Our two hour entrance was calm and uneventful. With intermittent rain showers we tied up at the Kiel Naval Base, located some 7 kilometres from the core of the city.

Soon after having struck the few stores below, leave was piped and little time was wasted in checking out this new port of call.

DAY 41, Saturday, August 20

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday.

DAY 42, Sunday, August 21

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday.

DAY 43, Monday, August 22

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Make and mend.

DAY 44, Tuesday, August 23

0700 saw SNFL depart Kiel under clear skys. With only two days to Antwerpen the Force wasted no time in coming up in speed, our average SOA (Speed of advance) being about 18 knots.

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Before sailing SNFL cross polled once more, each ship exchanging about 12 personnel for the entire transit. Today we received four more Dutch 2 women, 2 men, 2 Americans, 1 German, and a couple of British. Crosspolling adds a certain flavour to being at sea. It enhances both the knowledge of the crosspoller and the host in the operations of our navies. It's very interesting to compare and discover the many similarities of which there are many.

DAY 45, Wednesday, August 24

Today we transitted straight towards Antwerp. The weather varied between rain and sun but sunshine prevailed for the most part. Seas 3-4 feet, winds moderate.

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DAY 45, Wednesday, August 24

Today was an uneventful day as we continued on our high speed transit towards Antwerp. However our SOA has become a 16 knots vice 18/20.

The high point of the day was Gatineau embarking the commander SNFL for the afternoon by VERTREP. He was given a brief tour and had a chance to meet several members of the crew. HE departed at 1700.

The weather was mixed with rain and sunshine with the latter prevailing for the most part. Seas are slight with moderate winds.

DAY 46, Thursday, August 25

Today we commenced our demanding 80 km transit up the river "Scheldt" at 0800. The river narrowed as we progressed further up the river and the current was easily felt. Apparently some points along the way experience up to 5 knot currents.

Tying alongside in the heart of Antwerpen at 1700, the crew was given a first hand sight of a very old European city. Not too far from our berth stood a towering cathedral whose beginning goes back to 1352. Antwerpen, located in the northern part of Belgium is home to over 1,000,000 people. The primary language is Dutch with many speaking French as well. Antwerpen is a fairly industrialized city with many factories and refineries located to the outside of the city while the interior caters to more to the business set. But history abounds here as there are hundreds of sites to be seen and experienced which makes tourism well worth the while.

While alongside we rose and dropped about 15 feet with the coming and going of the river which made for interesting climbs on the gangway at times.

DAY 47, Friday, August 26

Port visit: Antwerpen, Belgium.

Routine: Daily with Make & Mend.

DAY 48, Saturday, August 27

Port visit: Antwerpen, Belgium.

Routine: Sunday

DAY 49, Sunday, August 28

Port visit: Antwerpen, Belgium.

Routine: Sunday

DAY 50, Monday, August 29

Port visit: Antwerpen, Belgium.

Routine: Daily, Make & Mend with "Bosses Day!"

Officers and C & PO's wine and dine Junior

Ranks: 1

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DAY 51, Tuesday, August 30

Port visits Antwerp, Belgium,  
Routines Sunday

DAY 52, Wednesday, August 31

Port visits Antwerp, Belgium,  
Routines Daily with Make & Mend.

DAY 53, Thursday, September 1,

The weather for our departure began fair but soon turned to rain and high winds. Slipping early in company with the Force, having already been joined over the weekend by the new German contribution Schleswig Holstein and the Belgian Westhinder, we proceeded down the swift moving river. Our exit took half the time due to higher speeds in exiting and the tide was outgoing at the time.

Once out into the North Sea the rollers began to toss the Force in a gentle yet firm fashion, providing many new crew members with their first real experience on an unstable platform. With the winds also being what they were it almost looked like we were in for a blow but it wasn't to be as early in the evening the clouds abated leaving us with a starlit evening.

Our course now stands North although we dogleg here and there to get there. Our final destination is the Norwegian Operational Areas north of the Arctic Circle, to participate in a very diversified and complex NATO exercise known as 'TEAMWORK 88.'

'TEAMWORK' will encompass sea, air, land, as well as amphibious units from 8 NATO allies as well, units from France will be participating. It's scope is monumental in size and provides all involved with a very realistic opportunity to exercise in a multi-threat environment over an extended period. In fact, the playground encompasses everything inbetween from the eastern seaboard of the U.S. and Canada, to the English Channel, to the Fjords of Norway above the Arctic Circle. As well wargames on land will be fought using allied troops both as the aggressor and the defender. Over 45,000 personnel in all will be involved so one can easily appreciate the size of such an exercise. 'TEAMWORK' will run for 3 weeks in which many future inputs into this Nato day catalogue will make reference to.

DAY 54, Friday, September 2,

A fair day on the bring. Mixed rain and sun along with gusty winds made for a so-so day. The sea remains as a stern sea, i.e. it rolls up from behind and passes beneath the ship starting with the screws first. Therefore rolling to port and starboard is kept to a minimal.

Still progressing northwards to join the fun. Passing the time with OOW maneuvers.

DAY 55, Saturday, September 3,

Not a very busy day on the agenda, however the seas and general conditions overall were perhaps the worst they have been since sailing in July. The wind rose to some 30 knots at times, creating 7-8 foot seas. Nothing much really as far as real storms go but it sent a few of the younger boys scrambling to the heads and not a few plates and such were lost as we rolled back and forth for extended periods.

DAY 56, Sunday, September 4,

Today proved to be a long day indeed. Commencing at 0800, Gatineau assumed 'Lifeguard Station' as our consorts took turns doing stern refuelling from a converted German merchant tanker. What made the day so long was the unfamiliarity of both the naval seamen as well as the merchant seamen who had only equipped their ship with this form of rig only a month previous to this exercise. And all the while, Gatineau maintained her proper station 300 yards astern in case of the off chance that someone fell off, we would be in an ideal position to retrieve the man. Hence the term 'Lifeguard Station'.

I might add that the whole purpose of such an evolution is to exercise naval ships in refuellings from converted merchants such as we did today. It wasn't that we needed fuel, but rather that we become familiar with such apparatus as we may one day be required to do same under real combat conditions as naval resupply ships are few and many will invariably be lost.

What essentially happens is that the tanker trails his fuelling hose astern in his wake. Attached to this hose is a long leader of heavy line used by the destroyer to haul the hose out of the water. Once inboard and secured, the hose is connected to a fuel port on the receiving ship and pumping is commenced.

As the day took longer than expected, Gatineau was pressed into performing her evolution at night. As it is with all upper deck work and especially at night there is a real danger involved. The operation generally went well but during the paying out of the hose line one light line that was under too much stress suddenly snapped back, lashing one man's calves severely.

Our completing the refuelling signalled the end of the exercise, and the Force proceeded to the next rendezvous point.

This all took place about 150 nm east of Edinburgh, Scotland under sunny skies and moderate 4-6 foot seas.

DAY 57, Monday, September 5,

Not a busy day. From what they tell us, the big wargame is in a period of rising tensions but as of yet hostilities have not broken out. We practised a few Adex's and went active on sonar as there might be 'Orange' subs in the area. But no luck yet.

In wargames such as these, NATO units are divided into

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colour groups depending on the role they play in the game. For example, those that have the clear role of attempting what NATO might actually do in war would be coloured "Blue." (The good guys!) Those that simulate the Warsaw Pact; "Orange." Then there are those that can work for both sides (due to their limited number) but never at the same time, i.e. Tankers—"Grey"; Oceanographic services based at shore facilities—"Green"; Reconnaissance A/C—"White" and so on. It's sort of important to know when they're friendly and when they're not but these are all sorted out in advance; sometimes in mountains of messages.

Seas 3-4 feet on a simply beautiful warm sunny day. We're up just past the Shetland Islands enroute northwards.

DAY 58, Tuesday, September 6.

More rising tension but that's it so far.

Seas remain 3-4 feet under the same brilliant blue sky although one can see ones breath now when venturing on the uppers. Sort of heavy sweater temperature. We're presently sailing west to form a picket line N/S in order to intercept and make a mock attack on the very group we're entrusted to protect. The USS Forrestal carrier battle group! Simulating various Soviet warships, we will attempt to thwart their defenses and launch a successful attack. This is only in play of course as we will then become their ASW screen as they continue east.

DAY 59, Wednesday, September 7.

Not a very busy day. Last night the Hayler and Crijenssen successfully engaged HMS Illustrious and her band of consorts as they trekked eastwards towards Norway. This points out a correction to yesterdays entry: it was Illustrious we were after and not the Forrestal, but yet the will Forrestal remain as our center for the upcoming exercise.

Seas generally calm with slight winds and overcast. Our position! Approximately 150 nm west of the Faeroes Islands, tracking NE.

DAY 60, Thursday, September 8.

Less than 100 days remain in this extended European deployment! And yet another quiet day lay itself out to greet us. The seas remains baby bum smooth for the greater part of the day, winds light, visibility reduced for the most part by large batches of dense fog.

The only pick up point of the day was the refuelling with the German Spessart, a real tanker designed for that purpose. Other than that we continue onwards towards Norway.

DAY 61, Friday, September 9.

Finally, we have arrived at our destination, the Vestfjord. One of Norway's larger fjords bordering on the Norwegian Sea. Its entrance spans about 50 miles and runs for

about 110 miles. The Force has taken up its position on the right hand side of the entrance, hunting for several subs that might be in the area. The bulk of the entrance is considered mined for exercise purposes so that limits the grounds a submarine may lurk in at or near the entrance.

I suppose this fjord is not unlike the others in that it is rimmed with steep mountains with sharp cliffs jutting out of the water almost everywhere you look. Some ice flows can be seen as they make their slow timeless descent down through the mountains to the sea. And hanging amongst the peaks, lying in the cool still air, are the streaks of thin white clouds, giving the coastline an almost mythical appearance. And one must look very hard indeed to catch signs of human habitation or disruption in this vast and and beautiful, yet untarnished haven.

The weather today was calm, cool, and overcast. Typical Norwegian climate for this time of year.

DAY 52, Saturday, September 10,

Well finally would be the day that we came in contact with fellow Canadians in bulk. I am of course referring to our marathon RAS with HMCS Preserver. Long awaited, she would provide us with stores and provisions ordered months ago in Halifax.

The weather once again, as it has for practically the entire trip, cooperated in the fullest by providing mostly sunshine with only scattered rain showers. The sea was calm and the conditions were perfect.

Setting up for a 3 point RAS, it was learned that only fuelling and Kingpost would be required so the light jackstay gear was struck below.

Preplanning had already been done and Gatineau was ready to come alongside.

Of the two evolutions, fuelling took the shortest as was expected and was completed inside of 20 minutes. The major storing aft was on everybody's mind. With over 25 pallets of stores to bring across, Gatineau's entire crew got into the act. Receiving the pallets aft, two lines of handlers were formed heading forward to pass the provisions. The regulating office flats soon became a warehouse full of every type of frozen meat imaginable. For example, one ton of bacon was shipped. There was also the 50 boxes of "Crisco" food shortening. And the pallets of new uniforms to be issued in Kiel. As well as some mail, there were pallets of supplies such as electronic spares, stationery goods, engineering spares and more. Even 135 bullets for the three inch gun were hauled in.

In all 29 pallets and 5 cargo nets were stowed in under 1 1/2 hours when originally 4 hours had been allocated. It was indeed a 100% team effort and it showed.

That was the highlight of the day. As for the war, we still haven't had as much as a sniff of the enemy and the exercise is half over. But I'm sure it will come when the carriers come near.

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DAY 63, Sunday, September 11,

Nothing happened! Nothing at all! That's from our point of view. From the Penelope's point of view however things were almost catastrophic. I will explain.

The Penelope and the Preserver were setting up for a RAS further on up into the Fjord. It was a clear day with calm seas. But on the Penelope's approach to Preserver, somehow, Penelope strayed in front of Preserver and suffered a severe blow to her hull amidships at the waterline. The blow severed a twenty by four foot rip in her side located near the galley and engineeroom compartments. The collision started a small fire that was readily extinguished and some flooding that was quickly controlled. Most fortunately, there was no loss of life incurred by the battering of the two ships. Damage to Preserver was minimal in the form of a few dented hull plates.

It is obvious that Penelope's quick and correct response to her dire situation resulted the situation remaining as it did and not worsening.

Penelope's situation is that now she is at anchor awaiting the arrival of a U.S. destroyer tender who will in effect patch up her side so that she may return to Rosyth, Scotland for extensive repairs in comparative safety. No one expects her to return to the Force before we disband for the holidays. She will surely be missed.

The exact cause or reason for the collision has not yet been determined but an investigation has been launched. The results won't be known for some time however. It's just another example of the potential hazards and dangers that can exist in all exercises and evolutions that are performed at sea regardless of the inherent safety standards and regulations that are in place.

It's all part of earnings one's living on the sea.

DAY 64, Monday, September 12,

Just another quiet day on the Norwegian front. Weather fair, cool, with calm seas. No "enemy action" to report.

DAY 65, Tuesday, September 13,

Another almost disastrous day for the ships participating in Teamwork. Early this afternoon the SNFL member Westhinder, of Belgian nationality went aground and stopped on the rocks. One of her screws was fouled and she had a rock protruding through the deck in her engineeroom. Her rip measured five inches by two feet. The Athabaskan, part of the Canadian Task Force present, in an effort to help touched bottom herself but managed to stay afloat.

After a hour or so, the Westhinder managed to wriggle herself free and proceeded enroute to an American repair ship somewhere in the area. She has not passed her intentions nor the full extent of her damage to the rest of the Force so that all we can assume at this point is that the damage was minimal. The Athabaskan has anchored to assess her damage.

Rushing to the scene to standby in case we were needed was the extent of our participation in the rescue effort, however we remained well into deep water. It was a sight not to forget to see the tiny Westhinder so close to land with a towering mountain rising directly behind her. And slightly further away was the Athabaskan at anchor, licking her wounds.

Just this morning we performed a lightline with the Athabaskan. What a difference just a few hours can make in the outcome of a days events.

The Vestfjord is a relatively large body of water but as it is not a shipping route, navigational charts contain merely token depth soundings throughout it's length. The closer inshore soundings are too few and sparse to be trusted so mariners are at their own peril the closer they proceed to the jagged coastline. This evening we did the second part of our RAS with the Presever, taking on 5 tons of frozen meat in just under one hour. I wonder why we didn't do it all the first time three days ago?

The weather for all of this remains as always: cool, cloudy with some sunny breaks, with a little wind to ruffle the waves.

The war is still nonexistent but who needs an enemy when we'll bang ourselves apart. But the lead elements of the carrier battle groups should arrive sometime tonight or early tomorrow which afterwards, the action is expected to heat up. And shortly after that SNFL leaves the fjord for the open sea as our job of sanitizing the fjord will have been completed.

#### DAY 66, Wednesday, September 14,

Today we moved up a fjord to a place called Andesfjord which is located about 30 miles north of our previous location. We're here in support of the Forrestall carrier group which should be arriving tomorrow or the next day. We left the USS Roosevelt and all her colleagues in the Vestefjord last night enroute to here.

The weather has turned cooler with mostly rain washing down for the greater part of the day. The sea is calm due to the effects of the fjord. By the way I caught up with the correct spelling of the word fjord.

About yesterday, the repair ship Puget Sound is effecting repairs on Athabaskan and the Westhinder to make them seaworthy. Apparently, the Athabaskan lost her sonar dome in the scrape with the "Uncharted pinnacle." So it's all pretty serious stuff right now.

That about wraps up another day. 7 days till Kiel and 14 days till bumpy day, the halfway point in the trip!

#### DAY 67, Thursday, September 15,

For the most part, it was still yet another quiet day here in the fjord. The weather remains threatening but still it has not unleashed its fury upon us. today was perhaps the roughest day so far. The wind was high and coupled with our high speed manoeuvres here and there, it produced a semi-rough ride although the waves were only in the area of 8 feet. It seemed

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we always had a permanent 5-7 degree list to starboard for the entire time we heeling over when an especially stiff breeze caught us.

As for the war, not too much has happened. The one "bright spot" was when we encountered sub on the surface. There was an argument between the Forrestall and the Spruance as to the whether the sub was blue or orange. This was paralleled by our ops room personnel and before we arrived at an orange decision, the sub had dived and was gone. So much for lightening naval warfare!

DAY 68, Friday, September 16,

Nothing much to report today. The weather remains inclement with high winds and scattered showers. The enemy proves elusive to our vain attempts at searching out his location. So this all adds up to another quiet day.

Did a RAS with the USS Milwaukee, an American tanker. Uneventful.

DAY 69, Saturday, September 17,

Nothing at all happened today. Wx: breezy, seas 4-6 ft., isolated showers.

DAY 70, Sunday, September 18,

Again nothing at all happened today. Wx: breezy, seas 4-6 ft., isolated showers.

End of day 70...

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DAY 71, Monday, September 19,

We carried on with our southward trek to be in position for the next phase of the exercise called CIRADEX. It is a multi threat exercise employing all three platforms against three squadrons of ships, ours being one of them.

We started this transit yesterday leaving the Vesterfjord behind for good and so as to be within sight of Kiel for a 22 Sep 88 arrival vice 23 Sep 88 as was previously planned.

DAY 72, Tuesday, September 20,

Well it seems that a CIRADEX can be just as slow as TEAMWORK was. Indeed it may even be slower due to the fewer ships participating. We were however, attacked by fighter jets although I didn't go outside to see them. One can hear the jets anywhere in the ship as they buzz the ship at very low level.

We did a RAS with an oiler, but I don't know it's identity either as again I didn't make it to the uppers.

The weather remains mixed but fair, providing us with enough sun to make it a balmy 16 C. The seas are 7-9 feet, with light winds.

Our present location puts us back into the North Sea, gradually edging closer to Kiel.

DAY 73, Wednesday, September 21,

We started our fast transit to Kiel today in order to make our scheduled late afternoon arrival tomorrow and in doing so, we have indeed brought the entire exercise to its inevitable conclusion. In retrospect it wasn't all that of an exercise from our vantage point but I'm sure much was learned by other units and personnel.

The weather is fair with calm seas.

DAY 74, Thursday, September 22,

Well finally after 22 days at sea, we are finally able to set foot ashore for a long period of rest and relaxation. And well earned I might add.

We entered Kiel at 1700 hrs after a hurried transit and after which we began the busy chores necessary after coming alongside. The Holstein berthed beside us so the brow area was twice as congested at times as we both had enormous amounts of gear and stores to bring onboard.

The weather is fair and dry.

DAY 75, Friday, September 23,

Port visit to Kiel, Germany;  
Routine Daily.

DAY 76, Saturday, September 24,

Port visit to Kiel, Germany;

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Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 77, Sunday, September 25,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 78, Monday, September 26,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 79, Tuesday, September 27,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 80, Wednesday, September 28,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 81, Thursday, September 29,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 82, Friday, September 30,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 83, Saturday, October 1,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 84, Sunday, October 2,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 85, Monday, October 3,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 86, Tuesday, October 4,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 87, Wednesday, October 5,

Port visit: Kiel, Germany.

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Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 86, Thursday, October 6,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 87, Friday, October 7,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 88, Saturday, October 8,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 89, Sunday, October 9,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 90, Monday, October 10,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 91, Tuesday, October 11,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 92, Wednesday, October 12,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 93, Thursday, October 13,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 94, Friday, October 14,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Daily Routine.

DAY 95, Saturday, October 15,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;  
Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 96, Sunday, October 16,

Port visits Kiel, Germany;

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Routine: Sunday Routine.

DAY 99, Monday, October 17.

Today marked yet another milestone in our European deployment as we slipped and left Kiel, Germany in our wake only to search out new challenges and new ports of call that would lie ahead in our near future.

And we left in fine style by closing up at action stations for the entire forenoon while the engineers (bless 'em) carried out a battle problem below decks. The weather is overcast with a fair breeze carrying. But the seas are relatively calm: 4-6 feet.

It was unfortunate that the Holstein was forced to remain behind to effect repairs while the Penelope's replacement, the Scylla, was unable to join us in Kiel and now looks that she will join us in Rosyth. The Trondheim is looking to make a fast break up to Norway to repair her variable depth sonar when the opportunity arises. So that leaves the Hayler, Grinjessen, and ourselves to carry on with the tasks at hand.

DAY 100, Tuesday, October 18.

Well we finally made it into double digits at last! And to mark the momentous occasion we did practically nothing except transit northwards to the Skaggeraak. (That area north of Denmark and south of Norway)

Weather is fair with some rain, seas 5-6 feet.

DAY 101, Wednesday, October 19.

A somewhat busier day today was. We RAS'ed with the German pilot Rohn and did some CASEXs and ADEXs with the German airforce.

The sun broke through today for the first time in a while. What a sight. Seas still 5-7 feet, with brisk winds.

DAY 102, Thursday, October 20.

Another quiet day with only an ADEX and a personnel transfer to break the boredom. The weather cooperated in the fullest however by providing us with plenty of dazzling sunshine and light winds.

DAY 103, Friday, October 21.

The usual again today but the clouds have returned once again but without the wind. This marks our last day in the Skaggeraak area after which we will make for the North Sea for more manoeuvres.

DAY 104, Saturday, October 22.

An unusually quiet day onboard Gatineau today in the sense of onboard activity. Being that it is Saturday, it is

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understandable. Calm seas and the usual.

We've slowly begun to make our transit now to the North Sea as scheduled.

DAY 105, Sunday, October 23,

Today provided us all with a grim reminder of the inherent dangers of life at sea. With the horrible memories of the Penelope's long gash still firmly etched in the minds of all who saw her, the USS Hayler while manoeuvring in close proximity to other ships during a night RAS, was rammed in her starboard quarter by the bulbous bow of the FGS Rohen, a German replenishment ship.

Gatineau, maintaining lifeguard station 500 yards aft of the Rohen and accompanying Norwegian Trondheim, immediately reacted to Hayler's 'Flash' message that she had lost a man overboard during the collision. Having already closed up the rescue watch, the remainder of the ships company was ordered to the uppers to help in the search for personnel in the water. On having reached the spot where the man was figured to be, Gatineau cut engines and began the desperate search. Shortly, the other ships had closed to our position and they too began to ply the calm, cold, moon lit waters with their high intensity signal lamps. Gatineau and Hayler launched sea boats in an attempt to cover more area.

At the same time, unbeknownest to us, Hayler while in no mortal danger of sinking was in the midst of a desperate fight to contain the inrushing seawater and to confirm the presence of all personnel. While the damage control parties effectively contained the water, they reconfirmed their original assessment that all personnel were in fact onboard. This took 45 minutes in total but was a necessary precaution. Upon confirming that there were no men in the water, the Force was secured from the search.

This allowed the Hayler to get underway with the task of assessing her damage. What they saw was a 15 \* 15 foot hole in her starboard quarter flooding two minor compartments in that area. The flooding also continued into the emergency steering compartment which was not opened to the sea directly. As well, her starboard rudder was jammed with five degrees of right wheel on.

Not having divers of her own, Hayler requested Gatineau's to dive into her flooded compartments to observe the damage below the waterline. This effectively kept half our company up for the better part of the night.

All this while, the FGS Rohen, the other ship in the collision had gone dead in the water to assess her damage. She reported that only her starboard bow thruster compartment had flooded but she was very seaworthy and would return to port in Germany unescorted to effect repairs.

Throughout the night, the Admiral pondered his choices and options. Germany lay to the south 0110 nm, Rosyth to the north west 0230 nm but with smooth seas. With the knowledge that no personnel had been lost, the immensity of the situation seemed less. The ship could be repaired but it would take time,

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lots of time, but a life could never be replaced.

Again, a grim reminder of the need for constant vigilance and alertness while serving at sea in the company with other ships.

DAY 106, Monday, October 24,

Well the admiral made his choice and opted for Rosyth, Scotland in view of its better overall capability in handling the extensive damage. Gatineau was assigned to act as a close escort for Hayler while the Holstein, Crijnssen, and Trondheim would participate in a GUNEX and rejoin later. Our speed of advance is a good 14 knots (After Hayler had done engineering trials to assess her manoeuvrability in her condition).

We will escort Hayler to the entrance of the firth of forth (entrance to Rosyth) whereby we will turn about and sail to meet with the other three sailing to meet us. That should be midnight tomorrow. We will carry on with the evolutions until our scheduled entrance to Rosyth on Thursday.

DAY 107, Tuesday, October 25,

Today, under clear skies, we dropped Hayler off at Rosyth at 0630, and afterwards we proceeded back to rendezvous with the main body. Our plan is to meet up at midnight to progress further combat readiness requirements etc.

The weather continues to cooperate fully as we continue our progression southwards.

DAY 108, Wednesday, October 26,

Well after a non-impressive day of simple exercises we are in the midst of our transit back to Rosyth, this time in company with the rest of the Force.

The weather has picked up somewhat, giving us 12-15 foot seas with winds gusting up to 35 knots. One of the roughest days yet but far from being considered really rough. Just enough to make things interesting below decks.

DAY 109, Thursday, October 27,

Our sixth port of the deployment: Rosyth Scotland. Hardly nothing more than a large naval base supported by a small community, Rosyth serves only as a stepping stone for those wishing to visit Edinburgh only one half hour away by train. And it was under a beautiful clear blue sky that we entered Rosyth at 1330, its busy docks teeming with naval vessels of every description and size. Again as is the norm, after tying alongside we progressed with the storing and whatever in anticipation of securing. And it was soon to follow, as the job was finished soon thereafter.

DAY 110, Friday, October 28,

Port Visit: Rosyth, Scotland

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Routine! Sunday.

DAY 111. Saturday, October 29,

Port Visit! Rosyth, Scotland  
Routine! Sunday.

Remarks: Fantastic 'Hallowe'en party hosted by Junior Ranks for Force Junior Ranks on the quarterdeck under the tanning. A smashing success with over 400 guests.

DAY 112, Sunday, October 30,

Port Visit! Rosyth, Scotland  
Routine! Sunday.

DAY 113, Monday, October 31,

Port Visit! Rosyth, Scotland  
Routine! Daily.

DAY 114, Tuesday, November 1,

The first day of November was ushered in with the Force sailing at 0830 in company with many other ships for an exercise termed JMC 86. Basically it is a British designed and executed exercise involving subs, ships and aircraft in a free-play scenario. This one promises to hold more than teamwork did with respect to manoeuvres, contacts and overall unit participation.

The weather is perfect as it has been for our entire stay and promises to remain so.

Only 42 days to go!

DAY 115, Wednesday, November 2,

Today we worked our way up to the north of Scotland as we progressed in the warm up phase of JMC. It was a busy day filled with many CASEXs, ABEYs, and RAses. This time everything went well as there were no mishaps or near misses.

The weather was fair for the most part but the seas are beginning to pick up.

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DAY 116, Thursday, November 3,

The weather has finally set upon us in moderate ways. The seas have risen to 12 feet blown by winds gusting up to 40 kmph. Just the right makings for a tosey ride but not enough to prevent the game from going on.

Presently we find ourselves in the vicinity of Cape Wrath, Scotland. We had intended on firing 160 rounds with our 3"70 gun in a naval gunfire support role but a gun jam precluded our doing anything of the sort. The Scylla and Orijnsaen each fired one anti aircraft missile each with the Scylla successfully shooting down the towed target.

Our intention is to remain in this vicinity for the next few days while the participants in the game become more 'Hostile' towards one another as the scenario dictates that tensions are rising.

DAY 117, Friday, November 4,

The weather has abated somewhat but high speed manoeuvring in 8-10 foot seas still can cause considerable rolling and pitching. The upper decks are out of bounds for the second consecutive day as flying spray makes being on the uppers potentially hazardous.

The only highlight today was an unexpected RAS with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Tidespring at 2315. The waves were 4-7 feet so there wasn't a problem there.

We still find ourselves in the Cape Wrath area.

DAY 118, Saturday, November 5,

Still choppy seas with the uppers out of bounds. ADEXs have kept us busy for the most part and this afternoon we exercised the ship in a bomb threat scenario. Other than that not much else happened.

DAY 119, Sunday, November 6,

One of the quietest sea days yet. Films were shown in both the morning and the afternoon as the ships company took things easy today. The weather was moderate to make things fairly relaxing.

The operations personnel kept up the war with a few ADEXs, and such but that was about it.

DAY 120, Monday, November 7,

Another day on the exercise trail. We spent most of the time in surface action groups or SAGs as they are called. That entailed us to manoeuvre at high speeds for long periods of time. In these SAGs we prosecute enemy surface groups played as orange raiders by allied ships. It forms one of the main components of this JMC exercise.

The weather is breezy and the seas are choppy.

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DAY 121, Tuesday, November 8,

Today's highlight had to be the RAS that lasted nearly 7 hours. Upon receiving the order to RAS with a small German oiler, we prepared for a probe delivery as is our normal way. After having set up, we discovered to our dismay that a 'stern fuelling' was to be the method of fuel transfer. This entailed our engineers to rig hose intakes on the foc'sle while everyone waited.

Having rigged the necessary hoses, bringing the hose over was troublesome. And once connected, the rate of delivery was frightfully slow. But the most trying part was attempting to return the hose cone. All attempts to push it through the fairlead were met with frustration as the cone would not fit. But perseverance paid off and finally the RAS was over. A normal RAS might take an hour from start to finish. This one took much longer because of a breakdown in communications at the ship to ship level.

The weather was slightly rough so the RAS course was directed down sea to prevent waves from breaking over the bow.

DAY 122, Wednesday, November 9,

Well it finally caught up to us. After months of smooth sailing, the elements descended upon us in almost all its force. Building quickly, the Force soon found itself in a gale with 45 kt crossing winds and seas of 20'. Undeterred by the weather, the exercise carried on with its normal routine of high speed manoeuvring and gaming.

At about 2130 this evening, we took what had to be our best roll to date. Although I wasn't a witness, the cafeteria went for a major spill. All the guys on one side ended up on the other side, their beers included. Dishes, books, and everything else that was not tied down went for a major flip. It is estimated that the 4 rolls in quick succession averaged about 30-35 degs.

Sleeping will be difficult as the rolling is heavy and often. At last the Force has met with some inclement weather.

DAY 123, Thursday, November 10,

As expected, sleeping was difficult for most people. Some were even tossed out of their racks! The weather continued with all its force for the first half of the day. the seas remaining high, the winds steady and strong. At mid-afternoon however, the weather front passed quickly leaving smooth moderate seas and fair weather. The change was astonishing.

Another RAS today, but this time it was with the RFA Tidespring. Her probe method went smooth and flawlessly, the job being finished in less than 45 minutes. A few last ADEXs and CASEXs took us up to FINEX at 1800 this evening. Presently the Force is sailing in company with several of the other JMC participants for Rosyth, Scotland for one more visit.

This pretty well concludes the exercise portion of our NATO deployment. After Rosyth, only transits and ports are the order

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of the day as we begin to wind down our trip.

DAY 124, Friday, November 11.

A much finer day today than yesterday. As we closed Rosyth in company with the rest of the Force, we held a brief remembrance ceremony on the quarterdeck in honour of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice which included the laying of a wreath in the sea.

As befalls most junior ships, an seemingly especially Canadians, we were forced to anchor in the middle of the harbour as we waited for the Germans and the British to tie up so we could tie up alongside them. At 1400, we weighed anchor and went alongside the Scylla who was outboard of the Holstein.

Again the usual tasks needed tending to, and with all pitching in they were made short order of and the brow was opened at 1700.

Like our last visit to Rosyth, the weather is extremely pleasant for what one would consider a place so far north but that's the way it is.

Directly ahead of us we see the Hauler in her drydock. Her gaping hole be tended to. Her intentions are to sail with us from Rosyth but that seems unlikely at this time. The more she looks the more she finds wrong it seems. She may be delayed a week or so before she's finally ready to sail.

DAY 125, Saturday, November 12.

Port Visit: Rosyth, Scotland

Routine: Sunday routine.

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DAY 126, Sunday, November 13,

Port visit: Rosyth, Scotland;  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 127, Monday, November 14,

Port visit: Rosyth, Scotland  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 128, Tuesday, November 15,

The Force set sail this morning at 0830 under a brilliant blue sky filled with radiant sunshine enroute Southampton. The weather continues to be mild for this time of year. It is expected to be a quiet transit with only a mild flex to entertain the operations personnel.

DAY 129, Wednesday, November 16,

As we continued our transit southwards, the Force was exercised once again in an ADEX as we were once again attacked by the RAF. That was the extent of the day as we sailed through almost mirror smooth seas under clear skies.

DAY 130, Thursday, November 17,

Another quiet day as we progressed up the channel towards Portsmouth and Southampton. It seems that we are unable to obtain our scheduled berths any earlier as was hoped so it appears that the Force will anchor out for the night in the Roads preceding the entrance up the river.

DAY 131, Friday, November 18,

At 0700 the Force weighed anchor and proceeded in line into Southampton, Crijenssen leading.

Southampton, a lively port city situated just north of Portsmouth, she has made her living from the ships that ply the seas. As far as one can see there are docks and cranes servicing ships from around the world. Southampton played a major role in WWII as a staging point for Allied troops embarking for transit to occupied Europe. Over 3 1/2 million servicemen passed through her city gates. She was also afflicted by heavy enemy bombing raids, the heaviest being the nights of Nov. 30 and Dec 1, 1940 where the entire city centre was destroyed and over 650 civilians lost their lives.

Today, Southampton sports a new life that is clean and vibrant. Her 300,000 inhabitants are friendly and lively. There are numerous things to see and do in and around the area that makes Southampton a great place to visit.

Leave was piped for the Force at 1500 and the gangways were opened.

DAY 132, Saturday, November 19,

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Port visit: Southampton, England,  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 133, Sunday, November 20,

Port visit: Southampton, England,  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 134, Monday, November 21,

Port visit: Southampton, England,  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 135, Tuesday, November 22,

Having finished our stay at Southampton, The Force set sail at 0830 for Brest, France for yet another visit. This transit will only take two days. The weather is calm and sunny.

DAY 136, Wednesday, November 23,

Today was the day that Gatineau had been waiting for in terms of getting ready for the traditional sail past. Literally weeks of preparation had gone into some projects while others took mere hours to prepare.

As is the custom with the Standing Naval Force Atlantic members on departing, a sail past is performed with the departing units sailing past those remaining as a form a saying goodbye. As we are all disbanding for the festive season, we all sailed by one another.

The wind was gusty and the air cool but it didn't dampen the spirits of those who had looked forward to this day. Preparations went from 1000-1300 with the sail past beginning at 1330.

Forming up in line astern at 350 yard intervals, led by the since rejoined Hayler her hole having been repaired, the trailing ship then passed the rest on their port side.

If Gatineau was ever said to stand above the rest on this deployment it would have to have been on this day. Our preparations were second to none, our decorations tops. Adopting a Christmas theme, Gatineau was bedecked from the fore to the stern in an array of imaginative and innovative decorations. We humbled those efforts of some of our consorts as they applied little if any effort to a proud tradition.

Having completed the sail past, the decorations were carefully stowed and the Force carried on enroute Brest.

DAY 137, Thursday, November 24,

1000 saw the SNFL arrive in Brest, France. Although not part of the Alliance France cooperates closely with NATO on matters of mutual interest, hence her ports are open to visiting NATO ships.

Situated on the Atlantic, Brest an ideal harbour, is home

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to Frances Atlantic Naval Fleet. Her fleet attests to the fact that France is indeed staunchly independent and has the military muscle to back herself up in matters of national security.

Brest also plays host to a wide variety of shipping including everything from fishing boats to large sea containers. Brest's history is long and colourful. it was a major naval base in the Napoleonic period and was a major U-boat haven in the second world war. In fact, the U-boat shelter constructed for their protection still is in use for that same purpose as its construction is formidable.

The city core exhibits many fine boutiques and shops with numerous bars and taverns. The people are friendly however unlike the other countries we have visited, english is not compulsory as a second language therefore, the language barrier was tougher than usual for most of the Force.

DAY 138, Friday, November 25,

Port visit: Brest, France,  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 139, Saturday, November 26,

Port visit: Brest, France,  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 140, Sunday, November 27,

Port visit: Brest, France,  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 141, Monday, November 28,

Gatineau in company with the remainder of the Force set sail from Brest at 0830 enroute to local operating areas in the channel where we would perform trials. The weather was fair and breezy as we entered the Atlantic once more only to seek the comparative shelter of the channel one more time. This stint at sea would only be three days as we slowly make our way east to make our next and last port.

DAY 142, Tuesday, November 29,

Today in the Portsmouth operating areas Gatineau carried out a long awaited trial. Having carried 'Rubber Ducks' since departing Halifax, she was finally able to test the new devices intended to draw away incoming enemy missiles.

Launched from the host ship in pairs, the automatically filled, pyramid shaped devices are then cast astern in hopes of 'fooling' the missiles onboard sensors into thinking that they are indeed the target of interest.

The 7 foot diameter targets owe their worthiness to their design and materials which on radar appears very much like the echo of a ship if not larger and more inviting.

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With this in mind then, Gatineau was sensed by high definition radars from RAF trackers to determine our true echo return as seen by radar. With this in mind the 'Ducks' were launched and the same test was performed to compare ours with that of our decoys.

As is the way of the navy, we have not learned the results of the tests but indications are that the decoys do in fact accomplish their *raison d'être*.

The weather through all this was fair as was presented by the relatively calm seas.

DAY 143, Wednesday, November 30,

As the last day of November dawned, the Force continued to advance towards Belgium. 'Rubber Duck' trials were once again executed, this time with the port pair and now Gatineau is duckless.

The weather is moderate with temperatures above normal.

DAY 144, Thursday, December 01,

As November rolled into December, Gatineau and Holstein found themselves engaged in a CASEX with a German submarine while the other members of the Force played elsewhere. This consumed the greater part of the middle watch upon which we hastened to rendezvous with the others to proceed with all despatch to our final port.

The weather broke out as overcast and cool. It seems that mother winter has finally blessed us with her touch.

At 1600 SNFL pulled into Zeebrugge, Belgium, the last and final port of call of the NATO 88. Only a small town, it's actually more port and docks than city and buildings. The population of 2000 sees to the daily goings on of this quaint little town that supports so much in the way of sea bound cargo. Within minutes lie the cities of Brugge, Knokke, and Ostennde which more than provide all the entertainment that one could ask.

After a major storing of provisions intended to last Gatineau over the next two weeks, leave was finally piped at 1830.

This is to be our last chance to say farewell to all the friends we have made over the course of the last five months.

DAY 145, Friday, December 02,

Port Visit: Zeebrugge, Belgium;

Routine Sliders,

Special note: As is the custom before disbanding, Commander SNFL Rear Admiral Redd, USN bade farewell to the company of Gatineau at divisions on the Quarterdeck. He praised Gatineau on her job well done and wished us well in the future.

DAY 146, Saturday, December 03,

Port Visit: Zeebrugge, Belgium;

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Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 147, Sunday, December 04,

Port Visit: Zeebrugge, Belgium;  
Routine: Sunday routine.

DAY 148, Monday, December 05,

Under fair skies, the Standing Naval Force Atlantic slipped from Zeebrugge, Belgium in the late afternoon, and in doing so brought to an end another chapter in the continuing evolution of the Force.

With the Dutch and Germans turning right, the Norwegians heading straight, ourselves and the Hayler turning left, it wasn't long before we were all out of sight of one another, each of us left with only memories of the others. The Dutch and Germans would be home tomorrow, the Norwegians soon thereafter. As for the Hayler and us, the Atlantic would have to be faced before we too made that one final landfall.

As if to beckon us to her, the Atlantic brewed up a fresh storm that had caused consternation the previous day. In fact, sailing early yesterday was considered as a means to out pace the gale force winds expected.

Guided by satellites and shore stations, Gatineau and Hayler have mapped out southerly routes in order to circumvent any future Atlantic blows.

DAY 149, Tuesday, December 06,

Today was spent traversing the English Channel for the last time. By midnight tonight we should be in the Atlantic.

The weather has abated somewhat with only moderate seas and 20 knot winds.

Our course is generally of a westerly nature, our speed 15 knots.

DAY 150, Wednesday, December 07,

Progressing further into the Atlantic at last, Gatineau has departed company with Hayler and now stands into the western horizon alone. The seas are exceptionally smooth with only a gentle swell to mark the movement of the ship.

The ships company was entertained with a Bingo night.  
Course 258 deg. - 15 kts.

DAY 151, Thursday, December 08,

Well on our way now, the company has settled down as the last days slip slowly astern. The anticipation is apparent in all of us yet remains subdued as 7 days yet remain to be travelled.

The weather has picked up somewhat lately. The seas are fair but it remains to be seen how far it will reach.

This evening was spent in the ol' familiar fashion of

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Klondike Night, Black Jack, Crown & Anchor, Horse races and others all came together to make over \$500 for Christmas Daddies, a charity to help underprivileged children during the festive season. A huge success!

Course 258 deg. - Spd. 16 kts.

DAY 152, Friday, December 09,

Perhaps one of the most gruelling days in terms of rough weather. The seas have picked up considerably and presently lie in the range of 12-14'. The winds are gusting upwards of forty knots which when all combined makes for a somewhat of a rough ride. Our largest roll to date stands in the vicinity of 30 deg.

It was an interesting day in terms of time. Not having changed the clocks since leaving Europe, this made for late sunrises and so on. Well we corrected all that in one fell swoop. At 1200 we had a pipe down (All off watch hands are secured for 4 hours). At 1700 the clocks were retarded 5 hours to Halifax time where we had another pipe down. So in fact it was a 29 hour day with 2 lunches and or two suppers which ever way you wanted to look at it. And interestingly enough, with the time change, the sun set at 1410 new time.

We have since passed the half way point to NFLD. We have altered to close the distance and now steer 280 - 16 kts.

## **HMCS Gatineau NATO 1988**

Unfortunately, this is where the reflections end. Perhaps the excitement of the homecoming got the better of me and I forgot my duty to this log.

I can say with confidence that we arrived safely in Slackers on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> of December after having stopped for some fuel in that heart-of-heart port of St. John's, NFLD. Yes, there was plenty of Channel Fever the night before. On arrival the jetty was full of families and sweethearts who bounded up the gangway after we cleared customs.

Although tired after not just a five-plus month deployment but a coastal transfer and subsequent workups as well, Gatineau would soon regain her sea legs and continue to be a stalwart member of the east coast fleet.

Phil Miller  
Ottawa  
March 2020