

Beyond the Call of Duty: The Canadian Navy and Humanitarianism

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The role of the Canadian Navy has constantly been changing since its formation in 1910. During the Second World War, and indeed for most of the years following the war and through the Cold War era, the Navy has been used for anti-submarine warfare. Activities that are indicative of this focus on anti-submarine warfare have included its role during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and its continuing emphasis on coastal protection activities in both the Atlantic and Pacific.<sup>1</sup> Beginning in the 1990s, however, after the end of the Cold War, the changing international situation has led the Navy in new directions. From its previous focus on anti-submarine warfare, the Navy has begun taking an increased role in humanitarian missions working, alongside other factions of the Canadian Armed Forces in giving aid to countries and people in need. Since the end of the Cold War, examples of these humanitarian missions have included:

- The 1990 rescue of 90 Vietnamese boat people by Captain Ken Scotten and the crew of the HMCS PROVIDER.
- The naval involvement and humanitarian work done by Captain Robin Allen and the crew of the HMCS PRESERVER in 1992-1993 in Somalia during the Somali civil war and subsequent famine.
- Activities carried out by the crew of the HMCS PROTECTEUR, commanded by Commander Randy Maze in the East Timor crisis of 1999.

To better understand the contributions and impacts of these missions a brief history on each event is required, beginning with the first example of HMCS PROVIDER's role in a rescue at sea of Vietnamese boat people who were en route from their home country to Malaysia in 1990.

While on a good will mission visiting various Asian ports in the Pacific, Capt(N) Scotten and the crew of the PROVIDER were underway from the port of Manila to Hong Kong when around dinner the ships look out had spotted a small wooden boat with what

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Haydon, "The RCN and the Cuban Missile Crisis," in *Canadian Military History: Selected Readings*, eds. Marc Milner, 349-367 (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1998), 349.

appeared to be sixty or so refugees aboard. Captain Scotten sent two smaller boats, a whaler and a Zodiac, to investigate the small wooden vessel. And after witnessing the condition of the people on board the small wooden boat he and the crew acted on instinct to rescue those onboard the small fishing vessel.<sup>2</sup> The crew embarked the refugees onto PROVIDER, a replenishing vessel that happened to be equipped with a vast array of medical supplies as well as medical staff. Although these medical personnel would normally include a doctor, he was not onboard during this particular rescue. Weakened by their journey at sea, the majority of the refugees had to be carried aboard as they were too weak to stand, let alone walk and climb. As they were taken onboard PROVIDER, their number was found to be closer to a startling ninety individuals, including children as young as four and three pregnant women. Once onboard, the most critical cases were separated in the ship's hangar, which typically housed the boats and two Sea King helicopters. It was later determined that the boat had set sail from Vietnam almost three weeks earlier, carrying roughly 115 people. It had been bound for Malaysia, but they were caught in Tropical Storm Nathan which caused damage to their engine and with no compass they began to drift aimlessly at sea. A few days later they ran out of food and water. Once the refugees were onboard the PROVIDER the crews first priority was to shower and provide the refugees with fresh clothing.<sup>3</sup>

Having taken these refugees onboard a Canadian Navy vessel, word was immediately sent to Ottawa to begin negotiations with the Philippine Government seeking permission for the PROVIDER to disembark the refugees once they reached port.

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<sup>2</sup> Captain Kenneth Scotten, "Interview," 7 March 2011, 8:15-8:38.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Scotten, Rescue of 90 "Boat People" South China Sea June 1990, The Journal of Mr. Michael Scotten, 1990, 5.

The Philippine Government, however, would not allow refugees into the country as there had been an influx of immigrations over the past few years. There were several critical cases onboard the PROVIDER, two of which ended in death and burial at sea.<sup>4</sup> While onboard, it became Capt(N) Scotten and the crew's main objective to treat the refugees with as much courtesy as possible. During the interview, he explained that for most, if not all of the refugees, their self-respect was all they had left. The crew quickly took to the refugees and many of them, in fact, began to inquire about sponsoring families after they disembarked from the ship. Meanwhile, continuing difficulties were encountered during the negotiations with the Philippine Government, as they would only accept the refugees on the condition of reassurance from the Canadian Government that Canada would look after any refugees that could not be settled within three years. After much difficulty in docking at the port in Manila, Capt(N) Scotten was able to disembark the refugees who were immediately taken to a camp, to which his crew were given a day pass to visit. Five years later all of the refugees had either been settled to a new home. Many subsequently moved to Canada, while others were repatriated to Vietnam due to legal issues regarding the status of economic refugees.<sup>5</sup>

A few years later, in 1992, HMCS PRESERVER was dispatched to the Indian Ocean, first under the United Nations mandated UNISOM I and eventually taking part in the American-led coalition codenamed 'Operation Restore Hope', which aimed to restore some degree of stability to war-torn Somalia. Capt(N) Allen and his crew of the PRESERVER were sent to Somalia to aid the Canadian Airborne as it was sent in as a peacekeeping force under UNISOM I. Their purpose was to ensure the aid distributed by

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<sup>4</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 19:10-20:03.

<sup>5</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 54:31-55:26.

the NGO's in the area was protected from the Somali warlords, who were stealing this shipments in order to fund their weapons campaign.<sup>6</sup> The term "peacekeeping" is here used lightly, however, as the traditional definition of peacekeeping is one that refers to "a neutral body's ability to go into a country on the verge of conflict and to separate the conflicting parties until an agreement can be reached without the use of excessive violence."<sup>7</sup> The initial role of the PRESERVER was to help refuel other ships in the region as well as providing support to the army on the shore, protecting shipments of medical aid and food rations that were being delivered to Somalia by various non-government organizations. This was the first time that all three elements of the Canadian Forces – air, land, and sea – would be collaborating on a mission. As for the crew of the PRESERVER, they were keen to do more than just "sit back and watch the world go by."<sup>8</sup> Within three hours of its arrival off Somalia, a Joint Force Headquarters was established in Captain Allen's cabin, whereas under the existing circumstances it would have taken three-four weeks to establish such a place inland due to the impoverished state of the country.<sup>9</sup> The typical practice of the warring Somali clansmen at the time was essentially to steal whatever foreign aid shipments they could in order to sell it for ammunition, which is similar to what they were doing with the food stolen from the humanitarian aid groups. Even the American Embassy was subjected to this abuse. When the Canadian Forces arrived in Mogadishu, Captain Allen recalls that "there was not a building that had not been ripped apart. You could not even find a copper wire in

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<sup>7</sup> J. L. Granstein and D. Bercuson, "Peacekeeping: The Mid-East and Indo-China," in *Canadian Military History: Selected Readings*, eds. Marc Milner 331-348 (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1998), 331.

<sup>8</sup> Captain Robin Allen, "Interview," 16 March 2011,

<sup>9</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 42:22.

there.”<sup>10</sup> Theft by the war lords had become so bad that if unloading support planes became stalled for whatever reason, the PRESERVER immediately had to assign armed sailors to guard it. Many of those assigned to these tasks had only recently graduated from university; “they had never been in a situation like that before in a zone where someone could come in and shoot at you.”<sup>11</sup> The PRESERVER went on to aid one of the hospitals located just outside of Mogadishu. Here, they not only stocked the hospital with various medical supplies from the ship but also fixed the air conditioners for the patients’ rooms. The PRESERVER also took part in various building campaigns, including the construction of an orphanage. Despite the incidents involving the Airborne and the resulting Somalia Inquiry, Capt(N) Allen and the crew of the PRESERVER completed all of their assigned tasks and departed from Somalia in February 1993 with a sense of accomplishment for the work they had done. Unfortunately, due to the criminal actions of a few individuals from the Airborne Regiment, almost all published historical accounts of the Somalia mission have neglected to mention what the Canadian Navy accomplished during its assignment to Somalia. Instead, the overwhelming focus of attention has been on the Somalia Inquiry and the disbanding of the elite Canadian Airborne Regiment.

Six years after Somalia, HMCS PROTECTEUR, as Auxiliary Oil Replenishing vessel, was assigned to an international peacekeeping mission in the western Pacific. Commander Randy Maze and the crew of the HMCS PROTECTEUR were sent to the small country of East Timor just a few weeks after Maze had taken command of the PROTECTEUR, an AOR commissioned around the same time as the PRESERVER.

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<sup>10</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 29:30-29:40.

<sup>11</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 52:52-53:09.

Cmdr Maze describes the situation as a sort of “baptism of fire.”<sup>12</sup> The Canadians were being sent as a part of Operation TOUCAN to aid the Australian-led U.N mission into East Timor. In August 1999, a U.N.-held a referendum had allowed the East Timorese population to vote on whether or not they wanted to remain under the control of the Indonesian government, which had ruled over East Timor since the invasion in 1975, or to declare their independence.<sup>13</sup> Despite an attempt to intimidate the local populations, utilizing the organized militias by the Indonesian Special Forces, the Kopassus, format least 89% of the East Timorese populations had voted for independence.<sup>14</sup> To punish the East Timorese for this decision, the Indonesian army invaded and with the help of pro-coalition militias had begun to wreak havoc on the small country. Essentially, the invading Indonesians had burned everything they could, and what could not be burned was destroyed.<sup>15</sup> The U.N put together an international task group led by the Australians who were sent in to stop the Indonesian Army as well as to aid the Timorese people. Canada sent the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, also known as the Van Doos, as well as the AOR vessel HMCS PROTECTEUR, which was tasked with supplying other coalition vessels involved in the mission. While not only performing their specific objective within the mission, Commander Maze admits that the most rewarding work that he and his crew did while posted in Timor was the humanitarian tasks they carried out ashore. Maze and the crew of the PROTECTEUR, aided various Non-Government Organizations (NGO’s) in building roofs for the local schools and the construction of a reception centre.

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<sup>12</sup> Commander Randy Maze, “Interview,” 23 March 2011, 2:46.

<sup>13</sup> Major Thomas Rippon, Commodore Roger Girouard and Eliot Lowery. “Leadership for a Sustainable Culture of Peace: The U.N Mission in East Timor.” Canadian Military Journal, (Autumn 2004), <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo5/no3/operatio-01-eng.asp>, 57.

<sup>14</sup> Commander Maze, 6:43.

<sup>15</sup> Commander Maze, 7:55.

In each of the three missions described above the crew and their leader demonstrated a desire to go above and beyond the expectations of their assigned duties. Sadly, these stories are only made available through the oral accounts of the men who lead these crews, since historians have gleaned over the Canadian aspect of the missions and the Naval aspect all together. And while each mission was unique, they all share some commonalities with one another by exemplifying the quality of performance by the Canadian Navy. These commonalities include the use of medical equipment and facilities, either on shore or onboard the ship; the crew's willingness to go ashore and take on projects to help benefit the local populations or NGO's providing humanitarian aid; finally, all accounts of the Canadian Navy's participation in these events would have been lost without the oral testimony of these people. For each of these operations, there is a lack of secondary sources touching on role of the Canadian Navy. With the exception of a few primary sources, including a journal kept by Capt(N) Scotten's son, a few newspaper articles dealing with each subject, a story written by one of the refugees chronicling his experience, there are only a few written accounts that provide the broad context of the events.

Almost none of the published accounts describe the role of the Canadian Navy during these humanitarian missions. In addition to the journal kept by Capt(N) Scotten's son, who was on PROVIDER at the time when the Vietnamese refugees were brought on board, the embarking of the refugees was also described at great length in a narrative written by Son Ky Vu who was one of the refugees. Son Ky Vu was escaping Vietnam

with his son, who he did not want to be forced into military conscription.<sup>16</sup> According to Son:

The crew attempted to lower the gangplank down to the small vessel, but it was too down low to reach, so they began to haul it back up again. Thinking they were being abandoned, the desperate people on board let out a despairing wail. But then, scramble nets were thrown over the side to enable them to climb up. Only a few of the stronger ones could manage it. ...The majority couldn't manage, so some men climbed down to lift them onto stretchers which they had passed hand over hand up the net into the waiting arms of the crew on deck.<sup>17</sup>

This matches similar accounts given both by Capt(N) Scotten and his son. According to his son's journal, "Most couldn't climb the ladder and had to be hoisted up on stretchers."<sup>18</sup> Capt(N) Scotten described the state of the refugees: "the good ones they got onboard and carried them all, [we] tried to put a ladder down so they could climb up. We wound up putting a scrambling ladder down...and put a bunch of sailors and they just lifted them up."<sup>19</sup> According to Capt(N) Scotten there was a wide range of people on board the tiny fishing vessel; "we had everything from babies to old people, had a real mix, whole families and parts of families... real fortunate because, um that we came along because they wouldn't have been able to get onboard a merchant ship."<sup>20</sup> It took the crew of the PROVIDER about four hours to embark the refugees onto the ship and scuttle the small fishing vessel. With the refugees onboard, the crew's focus quickly switched from embarking them to providing medical support. The Canadian media described the event briefly in a few newspaper articles after the PROVIDER picked up the refugees. One article describes the rescue, embarking and the medical cases as "A wooden vessel

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<sup>16</sup> Son Ky VU, "Narrative," 1995, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Scotten, 5.

<sup>19</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 9:42.

<sup>20</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 10:09-10:29.

was spotted drifting nearly 355 kilometers from land. Once onboard the Canadian ship, the group—including 13 children and three pregnant women—was given food and medical attention. Most were suffering from exposure, malnutrition and dehydration.”<sup>21</sup>

The reality, however, was far grimmer for the refugees and for the crew of the PROVIDER. In a telegram to the ship’s doctor ashore, Capt(N) Scotten noted that:

There were 58 males, 31 females of which 13 children receiving medical treatment. There were 4 people on IV treatment. One woman who was pregnant and gained 15 pounds within 15 hours, that’s how dehydrated she was. There was one male in critical condition suffering from dysentery on hypsometric shock, there were out breaks of eye infections and various diseases. He told the Doctor what to bring. There was also an outbreak of hepatitis so a supply of gamma globulin had to be supplied to provide vaccinations for the crew.<sup>22</sup>

As Capt(N) Scotten mentions earlier in the interview, the doctor was not onboard the ship when the refugees were rescued, which Scotten remembers as both “a blessing and a curse.” While he was not there for the most critical period he was, however, able to bring much-needed supplies when he returned to the PROVIDER. Another medical report was sent with the doctor, this was even more detailed with the medical status of the refugees.

According to the second report:

On second night I had another death onboard and we buried him at sea ... Hangar starting to look more like a refugee camp than an emergency hospital that because all the kids and everybody were responding quickly. 12 patients severely dehydrated, and require IV rehydration, four cases on pneumonia on IV antibiotics, 70% of patients have diarrhea, many with bloody diarrhea, suspected meningitis in 4-5 people, many parasitic infections both internal and external, and 10 mass cleansing and de-worming, significant malnutrition, over 80%, multiple ear and eye infections; eye infections were symptoms of severe malnutrition and dehydration...your eyes start to cloud over. Suspect a third pregnant individual, treating all ships company with gamma globulin.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*. 1990. Canadian navy ship rescues 90 Vietnamese boat people; [Final Edition]. June 21.

<sup>22</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 22:40-23:42.

<sup>23</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 34:33-36:24

While on board the PROVIDER, the refugees in the hangar were separated into groups that included the most critical cases and those who no longer in danger. One of the cases that had been moved to the critical side of the hangar was a young man with what appeared to be a case of septicemia:

Septicemia is an extremely dangerous blood poisoning. The one man suffered from an ulcer from the constant exposure to seawater and it was packed full of feces and stuff at the beginning, oh it was gross! My son was part of the team that had to clean this guy out... he survived actually.<sup>24</sup>

Based on a picture from the journal of Capt(N) Scotten's son, the ulcer was roughly the size of a Canadian two-dollar coin. Despite the initial condition of the refugees, however, by the time the refugees were disembarked in Manila only six people had to be taken to the hospital in Manila.<sup>25</sup> These six people, along with seven family members, were disembarked once the ship berthed in the Philippine port. As Capt (N) Scotten mentioned during the interview, one of his main goals was to not separate any families, as well as to treat them with as much courtesy as possible.<sup>26</sup> According to another passage from Michael Scotten's journal:

Only God could have brought them to us. Since we are a naval replenishment ship we have a doctor and medical staff, food, space, clothing, manpower and supplies available. No merchant ship has anything near our resources and would be unable to handle these kinds of numbers.<sup>27</sup>

The rescue of the Vietnamese refugees was just one example of the Navy using their medical facilities and supplies for a greater purpose. Another example of the navy going beyond their regular duty in regards to medical supplies and facilities is with the PRESERVER in 1992-1993. While the PRESERVER was in Somalia to essentially

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<sup>24</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 36:24-37:00.

<sup>25</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 52:39.

<sup>26</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 31:05

<sup>27</sup> Scotten, 6.

replenish all of the ships involved in the American-led ‘Operation Restore Hope,’ the ship’s crew wanted to do more than just sit back and watch the world go by. Instead, the crew asked the Joint Force to put them in contact with the Red Cross so they could try to get involved with some medical work.<sup>28</sup> In most published accounts of the Somalia Operation and Canadian involvement, any medical involvement is directly attributed to the Airborne Regiment. One example is found in Grant Dawson’s *Here is Hell*: “the Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle group ...ran a hospital that cared for the battle group and provided medical training to aids to the Somalis.”<sup>29</sup> Even in the articles being run by Canadian newspapers at the time of the operation, there was almost no mention of the Canadian Navy. All of the focus was on the Airborne Regiment; the only medical work by the navy that was mentioned by the papers being limited to a note that “the ships dentist trained 19 Somalis, showing them a kinder way to extract teeth.”<sup>30</sup> Determined to do more than just sit on the ship and wait to go home, the crew on the PRESERVER “sent a group of officers from the wardroom see what was there and what they could do to help out.”<sup>31</sup> The Red Cross put them in contact with a hospital outside of Mogadishu, a facility whose condition Capt(N) Allen describes as “real friggen eye opener.”<sup>32</sup> When the crew arrived at the small hospital, built by the Italians in the mid 1960s,<sup>33</sup> there was no working air conditioner, no working water pumps, the generators were near broken, the hospital had zero medical supplies, and the rooms were filled with people covered in

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<sup>28</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 56:22.

<sup>29</sup> Grant Dawson, *Here is Hell: Canada’s Engagement in Somalia*, UBC Press, Vancouver, 2007, 152.

<sup>30</sup> *Times Colonist*. 1997. Somali veterans left in limbo, skipper says. July 21.

<sup>31</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 56:34.

<sup>32</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 56:46.

<sup>33</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 56:59.

flies suffering from gunshot wounds suffered during fighting between clans.<sup>34</sup> The crew took it upon themselves to fix the air conditioners in the patient's rooms and bring them back to full working order. After the air conditioners were restored, the naval crew was sent to Mombasa, the capital of Kenya, to refuel other ships. When they returned, the administrator of the hospital had removed the air conditioners from the patient's rooms and moved them to the offices. The crew was understandably outraged and stole the air conditioners out of the offices and placed them back in the patient's rooms. As for the lack of medical supplies in the hospital, "anything we didn't need of a medical nature on the ship was taken ashore to the hospital."<sup>35</sup> Even the crews' doctor volunteered to work in the hospital when she was not needed on the PRESERVER. The 20,000 ton replenishment vessel also used its helicopters to evacuate victims of snakebites, vehicle accidents, and would treat these individuals on board using the ship's full medical facility.<sup>36</sup> The use of medical facilities and supplies during these missions is just one of the many examples of naval crews dedicating their time doing more than what was expected of them.

Another aspect of humanitarian work that was not commonly associated with the navy during international missions was their contributions to reestablishing infrastructures damaged in the recent fighting. In the case of Somalia, Capt(N) Allen and the crew of the PRESERVER helped aid the reconstruction of one of the orphanages in

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<sup>34</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 57:49.

<sup>35</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 58:15

<sup>36</sup> Bill Rawling, "No Task Fit for a Soldier? Canadian Forces Medical Personnel and Humanitarian Relief Missions Since the Second World War," *Scientia Canadensis* 26 (2002), 94.

Mogadishu. There were 400 kids in the 100-person capacity orphanage and a number of tents outside, all of which were totally deteriorating.<sup>37</sup>

So we were able to get a bunch of brand new tents from our good friends, the US Marine Corps, they were quote surplus tents we were able to uh get them and set two or three of them up and replace the old tents there that were just unreliable. And we brought a bunch of wood... we had taken onboard in Halifax and uh and stock pied it there and we were gonna build floors and three tiered bunk beds s you could stack more kids in these places because they needed the space. And they had uh one kitchen there, which was insufficient there for the number of kids, so we uh built another complete kitchen facility.<sup>38</sup>

They were called away again to go to a place called Kismayo, the southern port in the U.N operation,<sup>39</sup> where another war was going on. The duration of their absence was estimated to be a week and a half, and upon their return they discovered that some of the local people had taken a truck and driven through a wall, destroying the orphanage and stealing the wood. This reaction however was common from the local populations. Overall, Somali reactions toward the UN force in this period were becoming increasingly hostile.

Coalition forces in East Timor were greeted with a very different reaction when they went ashore. The majority of sources written on the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1999 tend to either focus on the Australian Forces or the 22<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Battalion, the Van Doos. The PROTECTEUR, however, served a similar purpose to that of the PRESERVER in Somalia where their main objective was to act as the fuel depot for vessels from all of the participating countries. According to Commander Maze, however, "One of the useful things we had done was we got involved with some NGO's

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<sup>37</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 1:01:15.

<sup>38</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 1:01:15 - 1:02:30.

<sup>39</sup> Dawson, 96.

and did relief stuff.”<sup>40</sup> One of these relief projects was the building of a refugee reception centre. The main objective of the reception center was to assist the half million people who had been driven from their homes during the recent occupation of the Indonesian forces coming back to Dili, the East Timor capital city. “They would go to the reception centre and within a couple of days would be able to go back into the economy and then more would come to the centre.”<sup>41</sup> The reception centre was established in the remnants of an old warehouse where only a metal roof and pylons remained to hold it up.<sup>42</sup> After the construction of the reception centre the navy continued with their relief efforts, turning their focus to schools and flying supplies into the mountain communities where the local populations were unable to receive aid provided by the NGO’s.<sup>43</sup> Maze remembers roofing the local schools with tarps as “one of the best days I ever spent,”<sup>44</sup> and he mentions the delight some of the experienced crew had taken in bossing their Captain around while they worked on the roof.<sup>45</sup> Despite going home in February, the crew of the PROTECTEUR stayed in East Timor 25 days longer than any other ship from any other force.<sup>46</sup>

It was not only the Captains and the crews who established a connection with the locals in each of these missions, but also the families of CF members who provided Vietnamese, Somali, and East Timorese refugees with some form of aid. The clearest example comes from the East Timor mission where the families of the crew put together care packages for the local people. The people that the PROTECTEUR’s crews were

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<sup>40</sup> Commander Maze, 19:03.

<sup>41</sup> Commander Maze, 19:14-20:26

<sup>42</sup> Commander Maze, 19:56.

<sup>43</sup> Commander Maze, 34:15.

<sup>44</sup> Commander Maze, 33:31.

<sup>45</sup> Commander Maze, 33:48.

<sup>46</sup> Commander Maze, 38:16

building schools for had nothing; they did not even have paper, let alone books, but soon they were receiving care packages that included paper, pencils, basic toiletries, clothes and a small gift.<sup>47</sup> The crews had to assemble these care packages in plastic bags as Canadian customs would not allow the packages to be sent already assembled. Once all the packages were made, all 600 were sent ashore with one of the men dressed as Santa.<sup>48</sup> While East Timor was a catholic nation due to their being a former colony of Portugal, their culture did not include Santa Clause, but upon being introduced to the children by local priests Santa was welcomed with great enthusiasm --, especially once he began to distribute candy.

The crew of the PROVIDER also became very close with the Vietnamese refugees as well. Capt(N) Scotten notes that while the refugees were aboard he had made it clear that due to health risks all food staff were forbidden from entering the hangar. "They were really upset, the compassion shown by the ships company to those people was amazing, and they really bonded with them."<sup>49</sup> Many of the men and women of the ship eventually donated clothes and other small gifts they had purchased for their own children and loved ones to the children and other refugees, who had nothing left in the world with the exceptions of a few baubles they had taken onto the small boat with them. One newspaper commented that "crewman taught the Vietnamese children, some of them wearing T-shirts emblazoned with red maple leafs and Edmonton Oilers emblems, how to sing Frere Jacques."<sup>50</sup> The bond between the crew and the people was exceptionally strong on the PROVIDER. The work that the crew had done for the refugees continued

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<sup>47</sup> Commander Maze, 29:43.

<sup>48</sup> Commander Maze, 31:23.

<sup>49</sup> Capt(N) Scotten, 28:11.

<sup>50</sup> *Ottawa Citizen*. 1990. Philippine government lets refugees leave Canadian ship; [Final Edition]. June 24.

even after the refugees had disembarked the ship in Manila. Capt(N) Scotten even arranged for some of the crew to go ashore in Manila to visit the refugee camp where the Vietnamese had been temporarily settled before they moved on to their next port of call during their goodwill mission.

The oral histories provided by Capt(N) Scotten, Capt(N) Allen and Cmdr Maze all provide clear examples of the compassion shown by the ships' crews and their desire to give aid and relief to people even when it was not required of them. These aspects of the human condition would have been entirely lost without these oral testimonies, as these examples are not normally made available to the public. Usually no one thinks of the good done by the Airborne during their stay in Somalia, let alone the work done by the Canadian Navy and the crew of the PRESERVER. For most people, and Canadians in particular, the work done by the Canadian Forces in Somalia has been forever tainted by two incidents. The first incident refers to the torture and eventual murder of a Somali youth carried out by a small few within the Canadian Airborne Regiment led by a single soldier acting without orders.<sup>51</sup> As Capt(N) Allen points out, the second incident when a Somali man was shot outside of a Canadian compound while he attempted to loot a medically equipped helicopter was a routine part of a Chapter Seven operation, but was instead viewed as a great breach of military conduct on the part of the Canadian Army. Only a few sources touch on the role of the navy during the Somalia mission, and even fewer touch on the Canadian involvement in East Timor, let alone the navy's role. The role that the PROVIDER played in the rescue of the Vietnamese did get worldwide attention, however the details of the rescue tend to be glossed over and therefore not readily available to the public. These oral narratives not only contribute to our

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<sup>51</sup> Capt(N) Allen, 1:25:27.

understanding of these events and the importance of the Canadian Navy as a Humanitarian force. Each of these missions are incredible examples of people's desires and capabilities to go above and beyond the task assigned to them, continually contributing to Canada's reputation as a humanitarian and conscientious nation.

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