

## TREVOR GEORGE JONES



One summer after noon at sea in 1943, having finished his engine room watch, Leading/Stoker Jones came up on deck for some air, walked to the stern, stared at the sea and saw a white line traveling toward the ship. Jones informed a shipmate who grabbed the intercom to the bridge but froze paralyzed with fear. L/S Jones grabbed the mike- the ship altered course immediately ninety degrees starboard, and as Stoker Jones looked to port, he saw a torpedo's wake run parallel to his ship, HMCS GODERICH.

Built in Toronto in 1941, HMCS GODERICH, a Bangor Class Minesweeper, was named after the Ontario town. After commissioning GODERICH steamed to Halifax where she joined the Halifax force and opened a career escorting convoys between local ports as well as trans-Atlantic escorts. GODERICH weighed 672 tons; her length was 180 feet; her crew was six officers, 77 men, 16 of whom were Stokers. Canada commissioned fifty similar minesweepers. Although her chief duties

were with the Sydney and Halifax Escort Force, she did clear mines in June 1943 sea ward from Halifax Harbour. One memorable departure from her usual routine was when GODERICH towed US Tanker Brilliant to St. John's Newfoundland, for repairs after that Merchant man was torpedoed (in November 1942 ). GODERICH saw continuous service out of slackers (in Halifax) for the duration of the war.

HMC ships duties were rigorous and carried on a minimum of rest in every variety of weather the North Atlantic experienced. Although damaged in November, 1942 when she collided with a Tanker -Iocoma in Halifax harbour.

HMCS GODERICH <sup>[1]</sup> spent long days, lonely months and years at sea steaming on duty between Halifax and Newfie-John and ran convoy duty with North Atlantic Squadrons west ward to 400 nautical miles east of Ireland. There the Britain bound ships continued east but before you could

utter 'Aye Aye Sir,' the minesweeper Goderich had turned 360 degrees and was escorting ships to North America. The good ship Godrich rescued survivors from the after section of US tanker Brilliant broken in a storm in January 1943.<sup>[2]</sup> The crew pulled those wretched men from the icy north Atlantic, wrapped them in blankets and plied them with rum and kye.

Trevor's ship sank only one ship, a British Freighter SS British Freedom, a vessel half sunk whose sad skyward stern was a navigational hazard. In March 1945, GODERICH took part in an inclusive U-Boat hunt. (read-unsuccessful) J 260, the GODERICH was paid off in November 1945.



HMCS GODERICH J260, Naval Armament Jetty, May 1945  
From the collections of Harold Murray & John Stewart  
Courtesy of Rich Murray & Jim Stewart

One of the vital crew members of HMCS GODERICH, Minesweeper J260, was a pipe smoking leading stoker who did not drink, Leading Stoker Jones, T.G. a sailor who served three years nine months within her iron hull.<sup>[3]</sup> Born and raised on Vancouver Island.<sup>[4]</sup> 'Jonesy' joined the Navy because he had seen HMC Ships taking on supplies near Goose Spit near the town of Comox when as a boy he fished the area with his father.

After basic training at Esquimalt, O/S Jones went to Calgary for advanced training. He was not there long when the instructors found out he had

completed two, of a four-year apprenticeship as a boilermaker, Stoker Jones was rushed as fast as the railway could carry him to join ship in Halifax.<sup>[5]</sup> When Jones reported on board, he was met by the chief stoker, Harry Wright "*We have a job to do and the buggers (aka his ship mates) are all drunk!*" It was Christmas Eve (1942) and the ship had orders to leave Halifax at 0400 hours tomorrow morning! "We have orders to sail, you know what that means?" This did not phase Jones a man with energy.

*"We have to fire her up right now?"* Jones asked.  
*"You think you can handle the Stokers-Hold?"*  
*"Aye PO, where's the stoker's mess to stow my kit bag?"*

The ship needed a Stoker as the Chief Stoker could not handle both the engine and the stokers hold. "*Wright knew by my trade badge I was no green-horn and showed me the boiler room.*" First Class Stoker Jones spent his first Christmas in uniform being pounded by waves along the coast of Nova Scotia heading for Newfie-John.

The common naval routine, on escort duty from Halifax to St Johns, was the duty ship stayed with the convoy ocean side while the other ships docked in Newfie-John and sailors received a four hour shore leave. L/S Jones remembers St. John as the perfect harbour with a narrow sheer cliff entrance which tested the ships navigator when entering or exiting in rough seas. Canadian sailors enjoyed Newfie-John but, if sailors had a choice they preferred Argenta where sailors were treated royally, with drinks a plenty by friendly Americans.

*"Apart from the atrocious weather and water conditions the sea bottom off Halifax was so boulder strewn that asdic echoes bounced in all directions and ships unwillingly tracked themselves. Only constant air patrols and operations by USN forces in the deep*

*water beyond the Canadian zone provided an effect check on U-boat depreciations in the RCN's own front yard in the last winter of the war."*<sup>[6]</sup>

After six months in the stoker hold, followed by six months in the Engine room, Stoker Jones became the upper Deck Stoker. The upper deck stoker, the mechanic of the upper deck, duties included maintaining the trim of the ship on shore and at sea, loading depth charges and manning the Cat Gear. 'The cat gear' which extended off the stern of the ship was clear of the submarine gates as soon as they left harbour and before the ship could safely birth the cat gear had to be winched and hoisted to its cradle on deck and made tiddly.<sup>[7]</sup> Upper Deck Stoker First Class Jones was responsible for loading food, water, ammunition for 'oiling ship' and making it tiddly.

In December 1944 the GODERICH and other North Atlantic Squadron ships were sent to Bermuda for some stress-free duty rest and recreation. When they returned to Halifax for Christmas there was two feet of snow and bitter weather, which resulted in more than half the crew becoming sick because of the sudden change in climate.

When peace was declared on V-E Day, Goderich was at sea steaming toward Halifax. Outside of the harbour 'The GODERICH' accepted the surrender- transfer of some U-boat kriegs-marine sailors. A memorial outstanding event happened when one of the U-Boat sailors said to Trevor, "I know you" and handed him a knife handle first, "Ya, I know you, I see you at the shows in Halifax." They had seen one another at the movie theatre on Barrington Street. For years there had been rumour of a German U-Boat near Halifax harbour; evidentially German Sailors in civilian clothes had made their way ashore and, walked to the city.

*"They spoke English just like you and me; they rowed a dingy from a secret hiding place."*<sup>[8]</sup>

When his minesweeper arrived in Halifax

Harbour there was no shore leave for L/S Jones or any other sailor. All sailors were R-O-B (required on board) because of the Halifax Riot.<sup>[9]</sup>

In the middle of May, someone came on board and said, "pack your gear, Boys, you are going home, your war is over." Five days later, after four tough years at sea on the North Atlantic, L/Stoker Jones returned to the west Coast Soon after he was demobbed in Victoria in the summer of 1945, Trevor Jones fell ill. He was in a fog for four weeks, lethargic for two or three months His illness was cured by herbs sent from Wales by his Grandmother Rees and the professional skill of the local druggist, Trevor's child hood friend, Mr. Jim Dick in the Union Bay area.

Immediately after wars end Trevor secured a job in his the Cumberland area.<sup>[9]</sup> Trevor worked for three years as boilermaker for Canadian Collieries at Union Bay and like many Comox Valley young people enjoyed a competitive game of Badminton. In Feb. 1948 he was introduced to a pretty RN from Saskatchewan. And soon they were batting eyes as well as birdies. Trevor married Muriel Longmore in September, 1949.<sup>[10]</sup> By 1955 the Jones had two children,<sup>[11]</sup> Trevor was healthy, and a respected workman as well as a community member, but Muriel's health was failing. Their doctor, Dr. recommended a drier climate, so Muriel and Trevor took a ferry and pointed their car east and headed for the interior of British Columbia.

As they crossed the summit of Hope, Muriel's breathing got better. While enjoying a meal in OK Falls, as fate would have it a local in the restaurant said, 'fellow next door has a garage for sale.' They bought it. Although it started out as a Shell Filling Station, when Jonesy was finished it was a completely new place, the best looking building in down town OK Falls, tended by that pipe smoking Jones man. Famous for his pipe, and if a customer saw pipe smoke billowing from the inside of an open hood it was a sign-Trevor was busy and not to be disturbed.

For twenty years, from 1955 to 1975 Trevor ran 'Falls Service' He sold Shell Oil, ran a tow truck, sold cars, fixed engines and soon established a reputation as an active OK Falls citizen. Up to his neck in the community, Trevor invented the OK Falls Fire Department which evolved from an old 1936 (fire-engine) truck in an old horse barn in the area where the school and stock yards are today. Jones secured the property for the new impressive modern Fire Department. Trevor was a Credit Union Man, a Credit Union Board member and past President of the OK Falls Credit Union. Yes he was an active member of the OK Falls Legion, the United Church, the Board of Trade and Senior Center. One might say Trevor was the unofficial Mayor.<sup>[12]</sup>

For relaxation Muriel and Trevor enjoyed fishing, to get away from the garage and home, to be out with nature catching fish. One of the curious factors when fishing for months or was it years was Muriel caught all the fish and pipe smoking Trevor never had any luck. Muriel, who was from Saskatchewan and loved her naval vet dearly, came up with a solution. "*Wash your hand, re-work your hook and put away that pipe!*" she said sweetly. Trevor followed Muriel's instructions and mounted his old pipe on the fire place at home and never smoked again. That was twenty-five years ago and 500 fish later.

In 2013 Trevor and Muriel Jones left the Penticton for Prince George to be closer to their children.

## NOTES

The RCN destroyed 33 enemy submarines during the war, 3 Italian and 30 German. Canada's Navy brought 25,000 ships safely across the Atlantic. In the cold grey Atlantic with sixty-foot waves that tossed iron ships like bath-toys. this work was difficult and it was this work that made the Allied victory possible. In August '45, the RCN was the third largest navy in the world.

And for those who do not know, 'Stoker's held the ship together.'

HMC Ships in WW II were named after cities, towns or places in Canada. like HMCS Kelowna, HMCS Kalamalka. In the 1970s a Canadian submarine was christened HMCS Okanagan. The GODERICH was named after 'Canada's prettiest town' located on Lake Huron .

Damaged in Nov. 1942 the Brilliant was undertow by HM Tug Frisky and escort destroyer HMS Chelsea in January 1943 when she encountered a violent storm which broke her damaged hull in two. The forward section sank with the loss of eleven men, but the stern section, crowded with 42 miserable merchant sailors remained afloat. Cheslea and Frisky lost contact with it, but HMCS Goderich and Tug Foundation Aramore found it after a four day search. Goderich took off the survivors.

When First Class Stoker Jones RCNVR joined ship in Christmas Eve 1942 the CO was Lt (later Lt-Cmr) R.R. Kenney RCNR, ( OBE-June 1943), the chief ERA, Harry Wright. Jones' best pal was Guy Studd from Alberta.

Born in the coal county in Cumberland on Vancouver Island, when Trevor was born (according to Muriel Longmore-Jones RN), "*he came out backward and has been fighting ever since.*" Trevor's father, Alfred George Jones 1894-1962, born in Cwmbran, Wales was an orphan and raised by Trevor's mother's parents the Rees. Alfred immigrated to Vancouver Island as a miner in 1913. Alford joined the Canadian Army Medical Corps in 1915, demobbed as Staff Sgt. In 1919; he married Gertrude Rees and returned to Cumberland, Vancouver Island, where he was the Fire Boss of Canadian Collieries. When Trevor was six he went underground on Alfred's Sunday inspections in the mine. On the second trip there was a 'boom' which Jones Sr.,( a Jones from along line of Welch miners), initiated to frighten the boy.

He did not want his lad to be tempted to work the pit. After Trevor completed grade X, Alfred said, "You are not going into the goddamn-mine, you'll have a trade!" and arranged an apprenticeship for Trevor with Canadian Collieries Ltd at Union Bay. Cumberland, on Vancouver Island, founded in 1888, with a population of 3000 in 1897; was the home of Ginger Goodwin, labour leader killed in 1918. When Trevor grew up (in the 20s & 30s) Cumberland was an ethnically as diverse community with a Japanese Town, a China Town, a mixture of central Europeans and Brits with a population of 6000.

5. All stokers took a commando course as part of their naval training, the theory being- stokers were first to board an enemy submarine. Trevor was 1 or 16 stokers on board. St. Johns Newfoundland was the favorite North American port of RCN sailors.
6. Asdic conditions had been so poor that contact could not be made on the freighter BRITISH FREEDOM on the bottom with its bow pointed skyward. For years U-boats sat out side Halifax harbour waiting to sink another ship. On Christmas Eve '44 U-806 sank the minesweeper Clayoquot just off Halifax. In January U-1232 sank three ships off Egg Island, then attacked Convoy BX141 at the entrance of Halifax sinking two ships and damaging a third. It was lining up for another shot when the Canadian frigate ETTRICK ran over it, smashing its conning tower and snagging in its CAAT gear. No one in the ETTRICK knew what it had struck. The last RCN 'kill', U-1003, occurred when that U-boat collided with HMCS New Glasgow. Gimblett, Richard H., The Naval Service of Canada, 1910-2010 The Centennial Story, Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2010, p.104.
7. HMCS Skeena was sunk outside of Halifax because she lifted its cat gear too soon.
8. "The Urban Legend about Uboats sailors in Halifax. "A popular embellishment of these tales is that German U-Boat survivors when rescued were found to have ticket stubs from the Capital Theatre in Halifax on their person. There is absolutely no evidence in the meticulous Germans records or extensive post war literature that German sailors landed in N.S. This tale perhaps reflects how allied sailors saw their U-boat opponents with a mixture of fear and awe." Commodore Jan Drent CD RCN ret'd. May, 2014. Another possibility is that the 'Unterseeboot' sailor was playing psychological games. The crew must have been very nervous. Trevor showed me the knife-April 2012-DBJS. U-889 surrendered at Selbourn NS in May 1945. Was that the Uboat?
9. The V-E Day Halifax Riot is an interesting aspect Canadian Naval History. While other cities opened its arms and facilities to its service personal, the Halifax Civil authorities who never liked sailors shut down Halifax. When Trevor and his shipmates were allowed ashore, the damage they saw was 'something terrible.' Not a business on Barrington Street was spared all were looted as was Oland's Brewery. Halifax civil powers blamed the navy, and scapegoated Admiral Murray in particular. Each Sailor was going to be fined to cover the coast, until the court of Inquiry, interested in the 100's of pictures taken by a naval photographer that showed Airmen, and civilians were more active looters than Sailors. Was the Kriegsmarine sailor was playing mind games?
10. A boiler maker's ticket took four years. Although Trevor started his apprentice earned \$2.00 a day at Union Bay, it was not until after the war that Trevor Jones returned underground in late 40s early 50s he had a job inspecting pumps at #5 and #8 some ten miles west of Union Bay, Vancouver Island. Canadian Collieries Ltd. - closed in 1955
11. Muriel, a farmers daughter grew up south of Moose Jaw and finished her RN training in 1948, landed a job in Cumberland hospital, joined the local Badminton club where she met the charming, blue-green eyed, pipe smoking T.G Jones, naval vet.
12. The Jones have two children Lynne and Douglas.