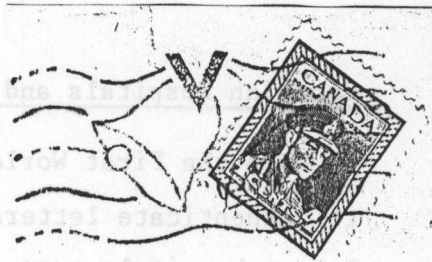
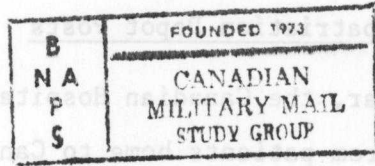




DUES



NEWSLETTER NO 77
DECEMBER 1987

SURPRISE!

A surprise Newsletter again this year! This is the seventh this year whereas the norm is only five. Hope that you do not mind.

The main reason for this issue is Wilf Whitehouse's article on the Royal Canadian Navy Christmas cards. It isn't really postal history but it is certainly appropriate at this time of the year. As you can gather, Wilf, having been in the RCNVR in World War II on the Atlantic runs, is interested in most anything naval. He would appreciate hearing from you if you have any of these cards. Sending him a photostat would be great, and I am sure he would be prepared to trade, or buy, such items if he has not got them.

(Wilf Whitehouse, 2427 Greenfield Ave. Kamloops, B.C. V2B 4P6)

The second 'article' herein was prompted by a cover of 1891 from the Esquimalt Yard - the former Royal Naval facility near Victoria, British Columbia. Hope you do not mind the method of putting this article together and we also hope it is of interest.

Perhaps we should dedicate this N/L to Wilf and the RCN and RCNVR!

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Just in time for Christmas comes this plea for money. We are out of funds again, so dues are in order. The financial statement for the CMMSG to date, and not including this N/L, is as follows:

Forward from 1986		63.19
Receipts 1987		162.00
Expenses 1987 to date	204.41	
Less prepaid dues	52.50	
Deficit this date	(31.72)	

Accordingly we are taking the liberty of asking for \$10.00 instead of the usual \$5. Since some of you have paid ahead, please note the amount needed at the top of this page. Cheques made out to Ken Ellison are fine - US cheques are no problem either.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

At the present moment it is unlikely that you will get a N/L in January as is usual. (We have had two extra this year!) It all depends on the money and material available then.

Very best wishes to all for the Christmas Holiday Season and the New Year.

KENNETH V. ELLISON
R.R. #1, OYAMA
B.C. V0H 1W0

In the First World War, the Canadian Hospitals used orderly room stamps to authenticate letters from patients home to Canada. In some cases, the larger hospitals even set up unofficial mail rooms when the volume of mails became too heavy. In World War 2, the Canadian Postal Corps Headquarters, learning from experience, allotted proper Field Post Offices by area to the larger Hospitals and Repatriation Depots in the United Kingdom. The major Field Post Offices were as follows:

UNIT/HOSPITAL	CANADIAN FPO #	BRITISH FPO #
9 Repat Depot (Jul 45)	SC 17	621
10 Repat Depot	SC 18	854
8 General Hosp. - Aldershot Hants, and		
4 General Hosp. - Aldershot	SC 25	821
2 General Hosp. - Bramshott and		
22 General Hosp. - Bramshott	SC 26	822
17 General Hosp. - Pinewood	SC 27	823
7 General Hosp. - Taplow and		
11 General Hosp. - Taplow	SC 28	824
Basingstoke Neuro. Hosp. and		
11 Repat Depot	SC 29	825
1 Special Hosp. and		826
8 Repat Dept	SC 30	700
12 General Hosp. - Horley and		
24 General Hosp. - Horley	SC 31	237
9 General Hosp. - Horley	SC 32	238
13 General Hosp. - Cuckfield and		
5 Repat Depot - Aldershot	SC 33	239
16 General Hosp. - Marsden Green Birmingham (RCAF), and		
7 Repat Depot - Aldershot	SC 34	827
10 General Hosp. - Leavesden	SC 35	828
Roman Way Conv. Hosp. Colchester	SC 36	240
18 General Hosp. - Cherry Tree, and		
6 Repat Depot - Aldershot	SC 37	831

W. Whitehouse

The recent acquisition of a R.C.N. Christmas card prompted a look through other such cards in my collection and some of these may be of interest.

In the early years of WWII, only a small number of our warships had been provided with badges, these ships would have been the 7 Destroyers and 4 small Minesweepers that were in commission when war began. The ship badge was displayed on the face of the bridge, on tampions at the main gun muzzles, on the bows of small boats, stationery, tableware, etc., and thus it follows that it would also be front and center on the ship's Christmas card. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1 - a selection of Destroyer badges

Because Naval Service Headquarters at Ottawa had more pressing matters to deal with at this time than the designing of ships' badges for newly commissioned ships, enterprising and artistic people aboard these ships prepared their own. As these designs were unofficial, none appear to have taken the same form as an official badge nor used in the same manner, that is on stationery etc., however these artistic creations (one uses the term loosely in this connection) did find their way on to the sides of the 4 inch gun shields aboard Corvettes, but that is another story altogether.

In view of the above, ships without a badge featured the Naval Crown or the White Ensign on the face of their Christmas cards while inside was a picture of the ship together with a seasons greeting. (Fig. 2)

An interesting departure from this practice was a 1942 card from the Corvette "Buctouche". A replica of a Officer hat badge surrounded by a circle of embossed maple leaves appears on the front, inside, rather than a picture of a ship, is a cartoon of Hitler being tossed from a donkey along with the usual christmas greeting. (Fig. 3)

By Christmas of 1943, we find some newly commissioned ships have been provided with a badge by the Heraldry office in Ottawa. One of the nicer examples is from the Frigate "Matane" showing it's badge on the front of the card, again the ship's photograph and greetings are inside. (Fig. 4)

Royal Canadian Navy



H. M. C. S. Drummondville

Royal Canadian Navy



H. M. C. S. Digby

Fig. 2 - Early cards from Minesweepers



4 - Badge printed in bright blue ink.
- Ribbon at left is navy blue.

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY

Fig. 3 - Gold leaves, blue background to the anchor, red in gold crown.



cartoon inside

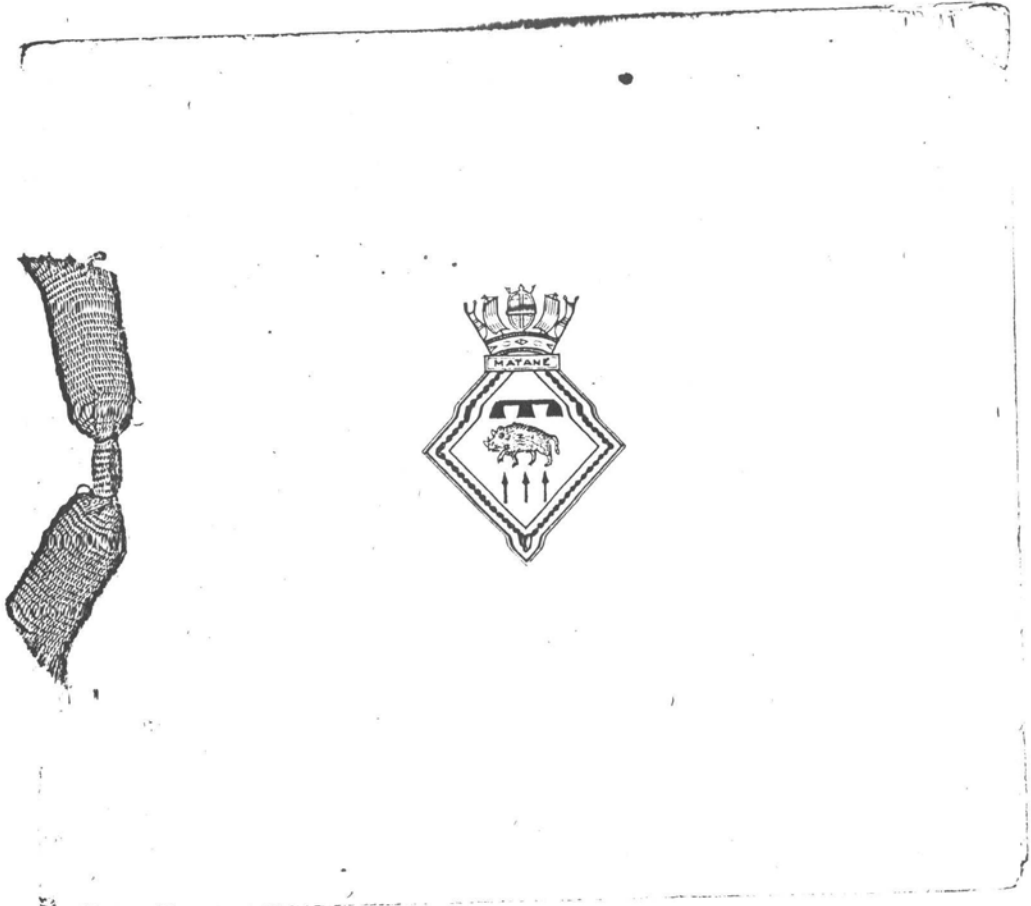


Fig. 4 - Badge printed in bright blue ink.
- Ribbon at left is navy blue.



Fig. 5

For Christmas of 1944, a most unusual card was prepared by the Frigate "Fort Erie". A photograph of the ship above a hand drawn anchor, rope, and Seasons Greetings, which was then photographed and finished as a postcard. The haste in preparing this card is understandable considering that the ship was commissioned at the end of October 1944, just 7 weeks before Christmas. (Fig. 5)

Post-war saw the introduction of a standard frame for the badges of all ships and establishments in the R.C.N. Gone were the shield and diamond type frames of previous years, the new frame WAS ROUND and retained the Naval crown at the top with the name plate immediately below. (Fig. 6)

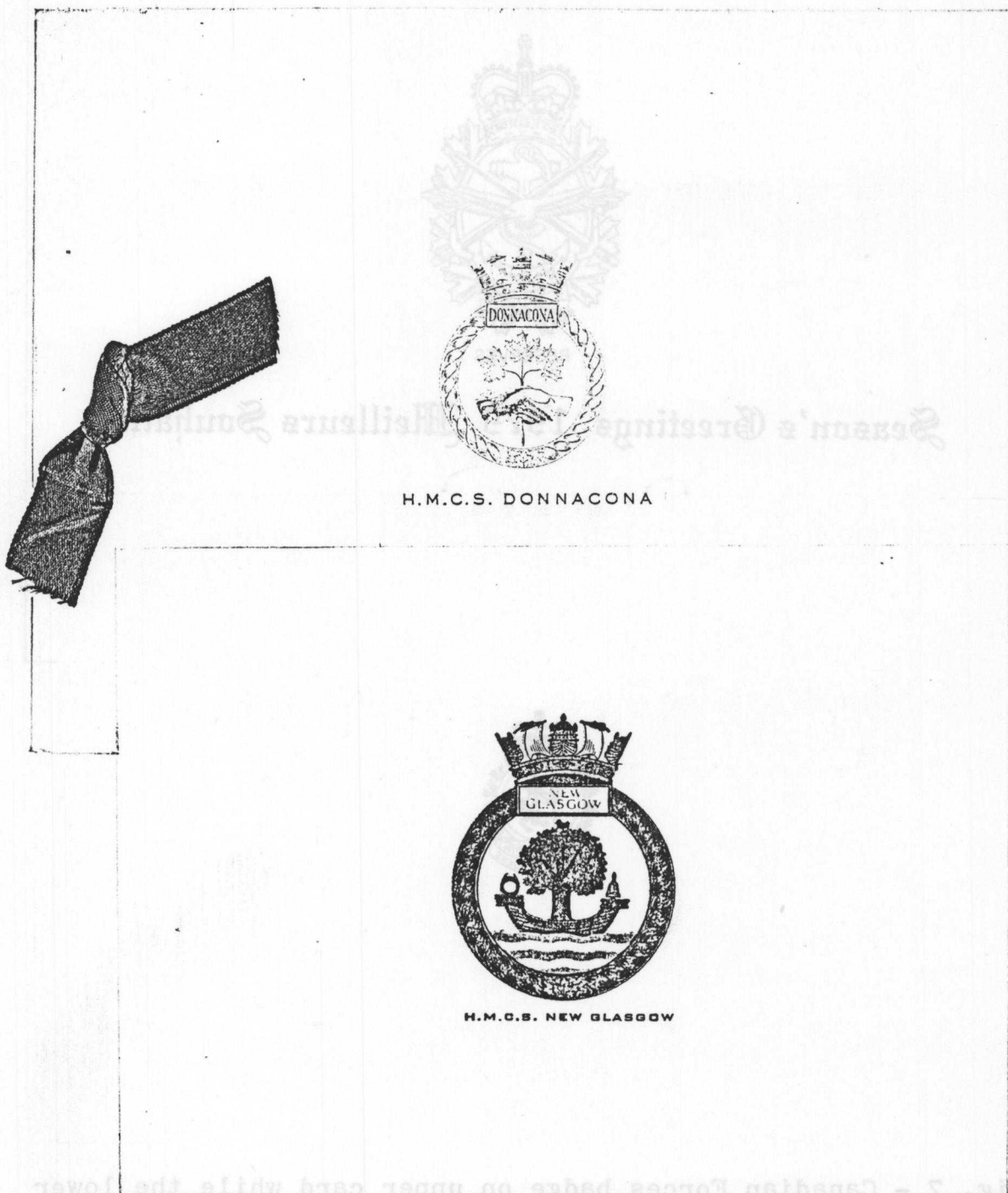


Fig. 6 - "Donnacona" is the Reserve Division at Montreal.
- "New Glasgow", Prestonian Class Frigate, 1964.

Unification of the 3 services in 1968 brought change to the frame of badges for various commands, bases, stations and air squadrons, and although this new design was to be common to all services, no change was made to ship badges. The new frame is either round or oval surrounded by golden maple leaves in most cases, at the top is the St. Edward's crown and the name plate at the bottom. Below the name plate is the base or station motto. (Fig. 7)

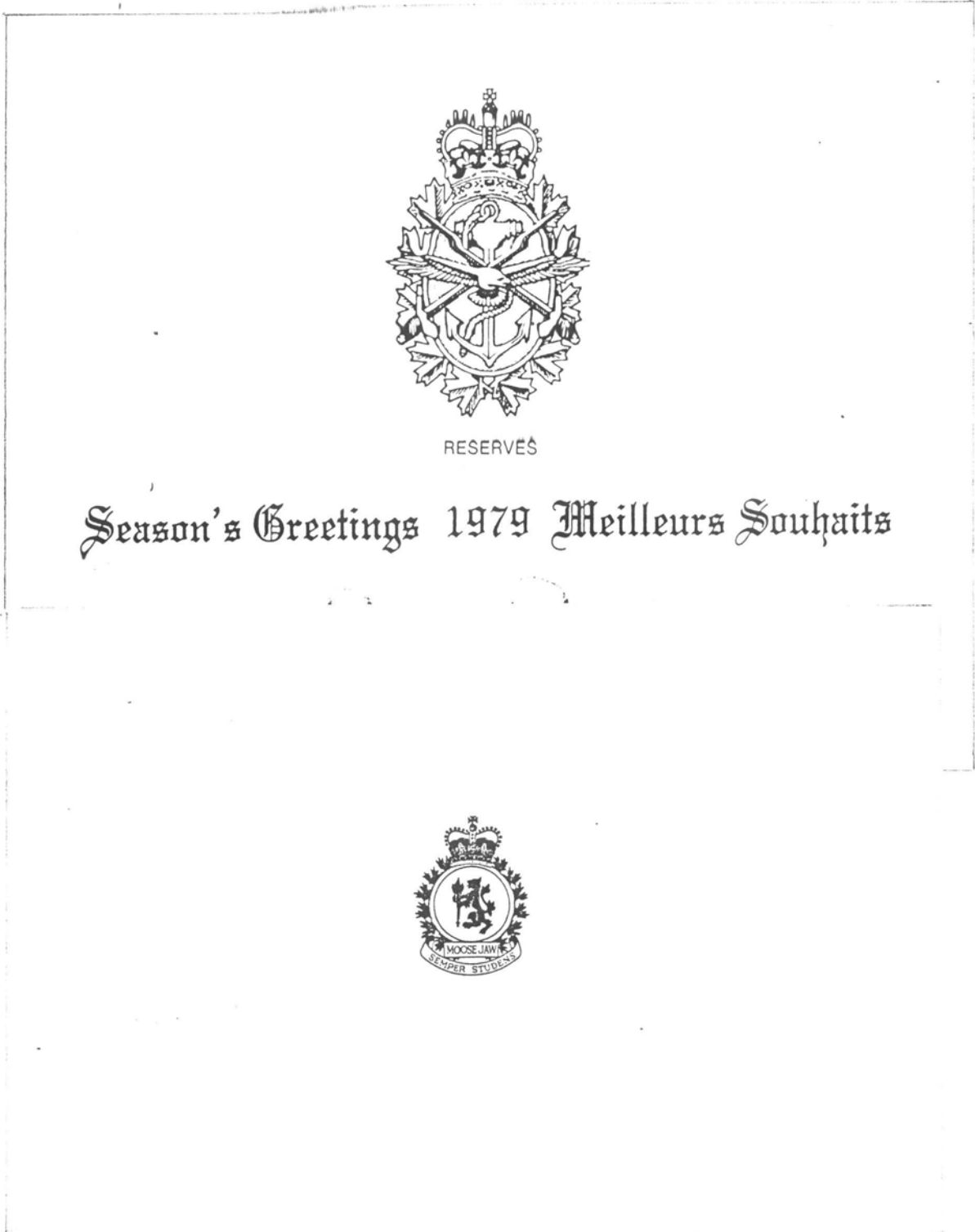


Fig. 7 - Canadian Forces badge on upper card while the lower is from the Canadian Forces Base, Moose Jaw.

ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

THE ROYAL NAVAL DOCKYARD.

The Royal Dockyard

Chatham

England



THE ROYAL NAVY AT ESQUIMALT

The above cover came to the editor from member Kim Dodwell in England for which many thanks are extended!

This cover was posted on February 25, 1891 at Esquimalt, B. C. as noted by the postmark. Also note the handstamp ESQUIMALT YARD, the five cent rate to England and the O.H.M.S. envelope. On the reverse of the cover is a VICTORIA - B.C. / CANADA. with date of PM/FE 25/91 and a double receiving mark, CHATHAM / B / MR 16 / 91.

It is noted that the destination of the cover is the Royal Dockyard at Chatham, Kent, which was an important naval installation on the estuary of the River Medway. The sender was the Royal Naval Dockyard at Esquimalt.

Here follows on the next three pages an 'edited' summary of the history of the Royal Navy on the west coast of Canada, and in particular at Esquimalt which is adjacent to Victoria at the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Although not strictly 'postal history' it is hoped that you will find the article useful in your pursuit of these military covers.

These following excerpts are taken from Volume I, THE NAVAL SERVICE OF CANADA, published by the Minister of National Defense, Ottawa, 1952. It is suggested that further background on this subject can be obtained by reading therein the following pages: 54-59, 80-84, 104-105 and 160-161 (from which this article is 'lifted').

ADMIRALTY TAKES C. P. R. HOVARS. 1914

Vancouver Sept. 14.—The Admiralty has taken the C. P. R. boats Empress of India and the Montezgale, leaving the company with not a single ship on the transpacific service. Naval officials had previously taken over the Empresses Russia, Asia and Japan.

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The eastern Pacific and the west coast of North America were very late arrivals on the stage of world strategy; consequently the creation of Esquimalt as a naval base post-dated that of Halifax by more than a century. Sustained British interest in what is now the coast of British Columbia began with Capt. Cook's third voyage, 1776-79, which was followed in 1792 by the visit of Capt. Vancouver to those waters. The Hudson's Bay Company later extended its activities to the Pacific Coast, and in 1843 founded Fort Camosun, which was soon to be re-named Victoria. In 1849 the Company received the grant of Vancouver Island to which it undertook to bring settlers, and in the same year Victoria became its western headquarters. This small fortified trading-post on the southern tip of the island proved to be the beginning of a prosperous settlement with a promising future.

The founding of Victoria and the subsequent development on the island of a colony which soon afterwards extended to the mainland, imposed a new responsibility upon the Royal Navy. From the settlement of the Nootka dispute between Spain and Great Britain in 1795 down to the establishing of Victoria, there had been no need for British frigates to cruise as far north as Vancouver Island. The Pacific Station as a separate entity had been created in 1837, with its headquarters at Valparaiso. In 1846, three years after the planting of Victoria, the survey vessel H.M.S. *Pandora* came north and began to chart the harbour of Victoria and that of Esquimalt nearby; and in July 1848, H.M. frigate *Constance* used Esquimalt harbour as an anchorage, this being the first occasion on which a ship of the Royal Navy ever did so.³⁶

The harbour at Victoria is very restricted, and the site of the fort there had been chosen by the Hudson's Bay Company officials chiefly on account of the good agricultural land in the vicinity. Esquimalt, which is three miles from Victoria, is a first-rate harbour of medium size, and the ships of the Pacific Squadron used it after 1848 whenever they were in that neighbourhood. The Spanish had named the harbour, in 1790, Puerto de Córdova; the British adopted the Indian name, which may mean "a place gradually shoaling."³⁷ In the very early days this name was often spelled "Is-whoy-malth" or "Squirnal".

The beginning of a naval establishment at Esquimalt resulted from the Crimean War which began in the spring of 1854. In September an Anglo-French squadron suffered heavy casualties during an unsuccessful attack upon Petropavlovsk—an action marked by a probably unique incident when the Admiral in command, having committed his ships to the attack, retired to his cabin and committed suicide.⁴¹ Serious suffering was occasioned to the wounded because there was no base in the North Pacific where they could be given adequate attention. In February 1855 Rear Admiral Bruce, the Commander in Chief, in a letter from Valparaiso, informed the Governor of Vancouver Island, Sir James Douglas, that a number of warships would be visiting the island the following July, and asked him to obtain a supply of coal and of fresh meat and vegetables for their use. The letter concluded with the suggestion: "Your Excellency will probably be able to provide a building upon the arrival of the Squadron, that may serve as a temporary Hospital for the sick and wounded: the want of which was seriously felt last year."⁴²

Douglas replied that everything possible would be done to meet these requests. Concerning the last of them he said that, as no suitable building was available, "I resolved with the advice of a majority of the Members of my Council, to take immediate steps for the erection of decent and comfortable buildings, to serve as a naval hospital; and the work is now in progress, and will probably be sufficiently advanced, on the arrival of the Fleet, to receive the sick." In August Douglas reported that the buildings were ready. He mentioned the fact that they had cost about £1,000, and raised the question of who would pay for them. Soon afterwards a part of the Squadron arrived at Esquimalt and received the provisions that had been collected there for them: the hospital accommodation, however, was not needed. These hospital buildings were three in number, each fifty feet long by thirty feet wide, and the Admiralty willingly paid for them. They were the pioneer naval buildings at Esquimalt, and one of them lasted until the summer of 1939. In a letter to the Commander in Chief the Governor had suggested: "I think you would find it convenient to make this place a sick Dépôt, or what is better a general naval Dépôt for the Pacific Fleet." In November 1856, Bruce reported to the Admiralty:

I am of opinion that it would be an advantage to the Service, if a Provision Depot were established at Vancouver [Island] for the Ships employed in the North Pacific. At present a Ship stationed at that Island, for the protection of the Colony, has to sail over a space of seven thousand miles to get to her Depot: so that in point of fact, when a vessel arrives at that distant part of the Station, it is time to think of returning again for supplies.⁴³

At the beginning of the Crimean War the Russian and British Governments had reached an agreement which in practice made the eastern Pacific a neutral area. The colony of Vancouver Island, however, remained in ignorance of this fact for several months, and the colonists were consequently alarmed by their apparently exposed and defenceless position. A proposal to draft the able-bodied settlers and to arm some of the Indians was brought before the Council, only to be rejected. Instead the colony chartered the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer *Otter*, and employed her as a patrol vessel for a short time, at a cost of £400 which the British Government eventually paid. During this war the colony was never, in fact, in any appreciable danger of Russian attack.⁴⁴

The harbour continued to be used by ships of the squadron after the Crimean War, and store ships brought supplies there from England. In various places along the shore houses built by colonists began to appear. By 1856 the colony was considered sufficiently mature to receive a representative Assembly. Two years later the discovery of gold up the Fraser River caused a gold rush and the creation of a government for the mainland.

In March 1859, the Admiralty asked the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Station, Rear Admiral Baynes, for his opinion concerning the best position for the headquarters of the Station. Baynes replied that should the Admiralty decide to move the headquarters from Valparaiso, Esquimalt would be found to have many advantages. He considered that the duties of a Commander in Chief could be carried out as efficiently at Esquimalt as at Valparaiso. As far as was known no harbour in those waters was better suited than Esquimalt for a naval yard and hospital; moreover the seventeen acres which, in addition to the hospital site, the Admiralty owned there, would afford ample space for all purposes. The climate was very healthy. Stores and provisions kept well, and were, except for fresh beef, at least as cheap at Victoria as at Valparaiso. The Admiral suggested that the money put into circulation by such a naval establishment would greatly help the infant colony.

Soon after British Columbia had entered Confederation the government of that Province began to construct a dry dock adjoining the naval yard at Esquimalt. The Admiralty agreed to contribute £30,000 towards the cost, an amount which was later raised to £50,000, and the Dominion also contributed. The actual costs were soon leaving the estimates far behind, and the project became a serious political issue in the Province. The Dominion took over the ownership of the enterprise, and the dry dock, a large part of which had been cut out of solid rock, was opened on July 20, 1887.⁴⁵ By agreement with the Canadian Government, for a period of fifteen years from January 1888, ships of the Royal Navy were to have priority in the use of this dock, and its services at cost. Before its completion, warships at Esquimalt requiring a dry dock had been sent to San Francisco.⁴⁶

The existence of coal on Vancouver Island had been known at an early date, and in 1851 a coal mine was opened at Nanaimo within easy reach of Esquimalt. The Nanaimo coal was of good quality, though considered inferior for steaming purposes to the best Welsh product, and the presence of the mines so near at hand became an important asset as warships came to rely primarily or entirely on engines instead of sails. A coal depot was established on Thetis Island in 1860.

DECENTRALIZATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

THE danger with which the expanding German Navy seemed to threaten British sea power transformed imperial naval defence into an immediate and pressing problem. Accordingly, as far as the Dominions were concerned, the evolution of naval policy was greatly accelerated, and in the years from 1902 to 1909 the structure of imperial naval defence was fundamentally altered. The Admiralty's policy of concentrating its forces more fully in one part of the Empire produced a decentralizing of responsibility. In this situation the part to be played by the Dominions was agreed upon in principle. In assigning this part Dominion autonomy was given priority over purely naval considerations, and the policy of separate Dominion naval forces was established. As far as Canada was concerned these changes were to result in the transfer to Canadian ownership of the naval bases at Halifax and Esquimalt, and in the creation of a separate naval organization. The decision of the Admiralty to face the growing German Navy by concentrating a larger proportion of the Royal Navy in home waters involved the reduction or abolition of the squadrons on some of the outlying stations. In accord with this policy almost

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the whole of the Pacific Squadron was withdrawn from that station. On February 28, 1905, Commodore J. E. C. Goodrich lowered his flag in H.M.S. *Bonaventure*, and on March 4 the former flag-ship sailed from Esquimalt for duty with the China Squadron, leaving on the station only H.M.S. *Shearwater* and the surveying ship *Egeria*.¹

The bases at Halifax and Esquimalt had ceased to be more than potentially useful to the Royal Navy, and the Admiralty was willing to transfer them to the Canadian Government, subject to certain conditions. These were intended to safeguard the Admiralty's future interests by ensuring as far as possible that the naval facilities at the two ports would neither be allowed to deteriorate beyond usefulness nor be employed for other purposes; and that ships of the Royal Navy would always be able to use them, particularly in time of war. In a broad form which left the details to be discussed later, the Admiralty's conditions were transmitted to the Canadian Government early in 1906,² and accepted.³ It was subsequently arranged that the dockyard at Halifax should be physically handed over to the Dominion authorities on January 1, 1907, and this was carried out.⁴ On later consideration, however, the Dominion Government disliked some of the Admiralty's conditions: these were therefore reconsidered, and less exacting ones were substituted for them.⁵ The revised conditions were essentially the same as those on which the formal transfer later took place.

In March 1908, the Canadian Government announced that the revised terms were "quite satisfactory in every respect", and accepted them. Authority was provided at the same time for taking over immediately the naval properties at Esquimalt, subject to the revised conditions.⁶ In Britain, however, the Law Officers of the Crown advised that the formal transfer of the bases would need to be covered by a detailed memorandum setting forth the conditions and agreed to by both governments, and also by special legislation. Such a memorandum was accordingly submitted to the Canadian Government, which assented to its terms.⁷ The Parliament at Westminster took the step required of it by passing the "Naval Establishments in British Possessions Act",⁸ which became law in October 1909.⁹ The Act authorized His Majesty, on the advice of the Admiralty and the Treasury, to vest any property

situated in a British possession and held in trust for naval purposes, in the Governor of the possession concerned. Transfer of custody would be effected by Order in Council, and would be subject to any conditions that such an Order might lay down. It was under the authority of this Act that the bases at Halifax and Esquimalt were transferred to the Dominion the following year.

The transfer to Canadian ownership of the naval bases at Halifax and Esquimalt took place soon after the Naval Service Act had been passed. In March 1910, the Colonial Office forwarded a letter from the Admiralty, submitting draft Orders in Council to authorize the transfer of the two bases. It was suggested that the Order relating to Halifax should be submitted to Council as soon as possible. A wish had been expressed from Canada, however, to postpone the transfer of Esquimalt until after the anticipated passing of the Naval Service Bill: the Admiralty therefore proposed to submit the Order concerning the Pacific base as soon as the bill should have become law.¹⁰ The Canadian authorities later proposed that the transfer of the Esquimalt base should await the arrival of the newly-acquired H.M.C.S. *Rainbow* at that port, and take place immediately thereafter,¹¹ and the Commander in Charge at Esquimalt was instructed accordingly by the Admiralty. The physical transfer of the properties at Esquimalt was made on November 9, 1910, two days after the arrival of the *Rainbow*. The sloops H.M.S. *Algerine* and H.M.S. *Shearwater* continued to be based at Esquimalt in order to discharge certain Admiralty commitments in the eastern Pacific.

The properties which were finally transferred by these Orders in Council were, as far as Halifax was concerned, the Royal Naval Dockyard and Hospital, the Commander in Chief's house and grounds, the recreation ground, and the cemetery. The corresponding properties at Esquimalt consisted of the Royal Naval Dockyard and Hospital, the naval coal stores and magazine, the recreation and drill ground, and the cemetery. Certain naval reserve lands on both coasts were transferred to Dominion authority by Order in Council on December 16, 1911. The assumption of Canadian custody over the bases and reserve lands was officially announced in the *Canada Gazette* of January 30, 1912.