



# UNITED SERVICES INSTITUTE OF NANAIMO AND NORTH ISLAND

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A very warm hello to all fellow Members of USINNI. I hope that this edition of our newsletter finds you in good spirits and enjoying the start of the fall season here on the Island. The year has passed quickly thus far and end is just around the corner.

As you are all aware we are currently into our fall membership campaign and I am once again going to remind all that it is Membership that keeps our Institute on the rails.

Without the membership support of like minded people, the Institute will find it increasingly difficult to keep our current level of activities up. As it is, the Board of Directors has slashed and cut historical budgets and as a result the level of activities we currently conduct as an Institute has been drastically reduced. As an example, we have been experiencing increased difficulty in finding good quality guest speakers for our

luncheon/meetings because in part we are not to fund travel expenses for potential guests. This in turn has a direct effect on the membership turnout that we receive at these monthly luncheons.

Please make an honest and determined effort to attract new Members so that we may continue to enjoy the fellowship that is so important to us all.

*Edwin*

*Nanaimo, 26 September 2017...*in June 2016, I "sorted" a column entitled *A Grunt's Perspective on Aeroplanes*, which didn't draw the kind of flak it might well have earned me. Flyers in the Institute took it quite well. However, now, it's the Navy's turn.

First though, a bit of a story and history. Cdr Pete Betcher and I shared a few thoughts this past summer about USN warships that come off losers when they bump into bigger ships in the dark, or, come-a-cropper at other times when dozy folk aren't practicing "defensive driving!" Anyway, we ended up musing over the Royal Navy's (RN) entirely different problems with lightweight warships and auxiliaries that had a tendency "to brew up" after just one Exocet hit,

## Military & Security Musings: A Grunt's Perspective on Warships

this during the Falklands Campaign of 1982. To save money, we build cheap. All this led me to recollections of the November 1914 Battle of Coronel, and, the December one off the Falkland Islands.

In the initial battle in November, the *Kriegsmarine's* then-modern five-warship East Asiatic Squadron, having earlier cut the undersea cable from Bamfield while sinking or capturing a

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number of allied ships in East Pacific waters, ambushed a smaller and lighter RN Flotilla off Chile's West Coast, sinking two British heavy cruisers, which went down with the loss of all hands. For the Germans, faster ships, bigger guns, accurate shooting and heavier armour carried the day. Just six weeks on, the same German Squadron, having exited the Pacific for the Atlantic, arrived off the Falkland Islands, expecting to raid the Islands, while catching up to the two survivors from the Coronel engagement. Instead, the Germans sailed into an ambush staged by a second RN Fleet consisting of two older but still powerful battlecruisers, three smaller but more modern heavy cruisers, two light cruisers, plus HMS CANOPUS, a battleship intentionally grounded at Port Stanley so that her 12-inch guns could be used as coastal artillery. Four of the 5 German warships were sunk that day with no further ship losses and only a few crew casualties for the British. Bigger guns, faster warships & seamanship carried that day. The one German ship that escaped was subsequently scuttled to prevent its capture by the British.

This then led me to reflect on the fate of the RN's Battleship PRINCE OF WALES and the Battlecruiser REPLULSE, both sunk lickety-split by Japanese aircraft in December 1941. This debacle followed the earlier May loss of the 20-year old HMS HOOD to just one well-placed shell from the more modern BISMARCK, a shell that passed through an unarmoured deck to explode below, promptly splitting the HOOD in two.

So, what's my point? Today, of all of our defence procurements...if we actually have any real ones... **just one single effective warship** would be the most expensive bit of kit on the list; by far! It had better be the **very, very best 21<sup>st</sup> Century warship** we can manage!

In this Institute's submission to the Defence Re-

view Panel, we argued that Continental Defence was our first priority, requiring in-part a robust Navy capable of operating effectively, in whatever may be the hostile environment, out to the extreme reaches of the three oceans that give us one of the longest coastlines of any country on the Globe. The Royal Canadian Navy simply does not have that capability today. Unfortunately, the current Liberal Government's May 2017 Defence Policy Statement only "promises" us a new surface fleet of fifteen warships, with the first of those ships to be taken into service sometime in 2026. Even that date is now problematic, with the recent announcement that the calls for contract bids are being reopened to ensure the largest possible slate of competitive bidders take part in the process: "*Delay, delay; with lots of pork-barrelling in play!*" In reality too, the CDN \$14.6 billion suggested as necessary for even just 15 warships, simply has not been included in any budget. Nor, will it be under any Justin Trudeau Government. Nor, will

\$ 14.6 B ever be enough! Sadly too, that fleet is equally unlikely to get funded under an Andrew Scheer Government. I just can't see how we will get to where we need to be, from where we are with Federal politicians right now.

However, while I may just be a Grunt, besides the absence of real money, I think there is another problem. In order to get any new bottoms afloat anytime soon, I can see that we are heading for another generation of frigate-like warships. At some 5000 tons, frigates are just too small to be useful in all-round 21<sup>st</sup> Century maritime defence; defence from air attack, submarine attack or surface attack, and, defence from over the horizon missile attack. The ship also has to be big and tough enough to be a platform for useful offensive weaponry and for the kinds of electronics necessary for the increasing challenge posed by Electronic Warfare, both offensive and defensive. Ship automation is also now much in vogue, but recent USN experiences suggest sufficiently large, tech-

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WO (RETD) EDWIN J PEETERS CD  
PRESIDENT, USINNI.

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nically inclusive crews will still be required. When automated or high-tech gear stops mid-seas, it can be a long haul & nerve-wracking wait for a tow or service call.

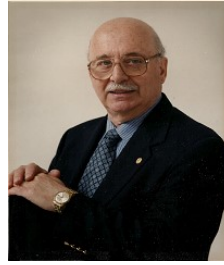
All this takes adequate ship-board living, working, storage and fighting space. Of course, this creates a bigger more easily detected & tracked target. But, from where I, a Grunt, sit, this still looks like a return to a Navy built around serious destroyers or light to medium battlecruisers, presumably in the 10000-ton range. To get started, the first billion or two dollars should be appropriated and **banked right now**. The second additional billion or two should be added to next year's Budget, and **banked right now**. The Rebuild Defence Appropriations, naval & otherwise, simply must all be real money rather than vague promises. Do that, and maybe we'll see new ships in real rather than dream time.

And, if the drawings of the first new battlecruiser aren't ready yet, let's not be reluctant to buy a suitable warship or two, right now, as an interim measure to at least get us into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We need clear, calculating, imaginative thinking on this in Ottawa...now!

*"Nothing turns out to be so oppressive and unjust as a feeble government" ...Edmund Burke*

*...."other than one that also just won't see and just won't listen".....anonymous!*

*... continued up and to the right ...*



*The views expressed in this column are those of Colonel (Retd) WJ McCullough, MSC, CD, a Past President of the Institute and the long serving Chair of our Military Committee. Ever restless, his Musings are, as always, the product of his own middle-of-the-night ruminations.*

## October Luncheon Meeting Guest Speaker

We are pleased to announce that our Guest Speaker for the October Luncheon Meeting will be Constable Mark Smith of the Nanaimo RCMP Detachment. He will take about his tour of duty as an RCMP Officer in Afghanistan.

Mark served in the Canadian Forces from 1989 to 1997 with the Calgary Highlanders, 1 RCR and 3 RCR. After military retirement, he moved to Tofino to work as a paramedic and joined the Canadian Scottish Regiment in 1998.

He joined the RCMP in 2002 and his first posting was with the Parksville Detachment for three years. He then was posted to Masset for two years and has been with the Nanaimo Detachment since. During his time in Nanaimo, he completed a tour of duty in Afghanistan. He is one of the 58 nation wide qualified RCMP divers.

## LUNCHEON MEETING ATTENDANCE

Your telephone contact coordinator will attempt to contact you in the days prior to the monthly luncheon/meeting to confirm attendance. In this manner we can confirm attendance numbers with the Nanaimo Golf Club.

If for some reason she has missed you, please attempt to contact her or Edwin at 250-7511-2360 or [ejpeeters@shaw.ca](mailto:ejpeeters@shaw.ca). Please leave a message if he is not available.

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This month's Luncheon/Meeting will be held at  
**NANAIMO GOLF CLUB**  
 2800 Highland Blvd  
 on  
**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11TH, 2017**  
 1130 hours.  
 \$25.00 per member/person.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS!!!

Yes, it's Membership Renewal Time!!!

As is provided for in our Constitution, existing Ordinary, Associate and Family Plan memberships **expire on January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018**.

At our upcoming 11 October Luncheon Meeting, Tony Pearson, your Director Member Services, will be on hand to begin early membership renewals.



Membership fees remain unchanged from this past year;

- Ordinary Members: \$50.00 annually.
- Associate Members: \$50.00 annually.
- Family Plan Memberships: \$75.00 annually.
- All Life Members: No annual fee.

Payment of Membership fees can be made either in cash (at the luncheon meeting), by cheque (at the luncheon/meeting or via Canada Post), or by email fund transfer. Email fund transfers can be directed to our President at [ejpeeters@shaw.ca](mailto:ejpeeters@shaw.ca).

Please present your Membership Card in person so that it can be updated with the 2018 stamp. If that is not possible, arrangements can be made to forward your 2018 stamp to you via Canada Post.