

From the Band: An Exciting Year of Performances



By: LS Nicola Loghrin

The HMCS YORK Naval Reserve Band has had one of their busiest performance seasons in years, with more exciting concerts to come in 2019. The band performs primarily in the Greater Toronto Area and acts as a public outreach unit for the Royal Canadian Navy.

In addition to supporting naval public relations, the band often supplies a musical backdrop to many local events in Toronto. Concerts range from cultural celebrations such as

the Roncesvalles Polish Festival and the Chinese Legends Gala to events that commemorate important moments in Canada's history like the Remembrance Day Parade at Queen's Park and the Battle of the Atlantic Parade at Nathan Phillips Square.

Certainly one of the highlights of the band's season was performing at one of the many citizenship ceremonies hosted by HMCS YORK this past year. "I could not be more proud of this ensemble for all they have

accomplished," says the band's divisional officer, Acting Sub-Lieutenant Hodder. "One point of pride is our continued support of Canadian citizenship ceremonies. This past December we swore in 500 new Canadians in one day and the band was a key point of interface with the new citizens. Being a part of that life event for new members of the Canadian family is something that touches every band member," A/SLt Hodder. The band's efforts did not go unnoticed and many

new citizens were eager to stop for a photo with the Jazz Combo after having received their certificates.

November was an especially busy month for the YORK band as they paid tribute to fallen soldiers with a week of performances in honour of Remembrance Day. The band performed two joint concerts alongside HMCS STAR Naval Reserve Band. The first performance took place at St. Paul's United Church in Dundas followed by another at Toronto's St. James Cathedral. The week ended with a Remembrance Day Parade at Queen's Park where YORK and STAR paraded with the Governor General's Horse Guards and other Military Reserve units from the GTA.

Throughout the year, musicians of HMCS YORK Band have the opportunity to augment the National Band of the Naval Reserve, made up of NavRes musicians

from across Canada. The National Band operates full time in summer months and performs NRETs during the training year, the first of which being the annual Calgary Pride Parade in September. Other NRETs include Quebec City's Carnaval de Québec, Montreal's St. Patrick's Day Parade and two training NRETS in Halifax and Victoria.

The Band of HMCS YORK appears with the kind permission of the Commanding Officer, Commander Walter Moniz. Still to come this year is the Chinese New Year Celebration at the Dragon City Mall in Chinatown on February 9th and HMCS YORK Band's annual Recital Night that will take place on February 20th at the Naval Club of Toronto. This performance features the small ensembles of HMCS YORK Band, admission is free and all are welcome to attend.



SALTY DIPS: YORK DIVERS COME THROUGH!

BY LCDR JACK
MCQUARRIE (RET'D)

In June 1963 the Royal Navy destroyer HMS Wizard came to Canada on a training trip up the St. Lawrence Seaway. While in one of the seaway locks there was a verbal altercation between one of the Wizard's crew and a berthing line handler on the lock wall. At the same time, the ship was about to leave the lock, the disgruntled line handler threw the heavy steel berthing line into the water. Before the man on the deck could haul in the line, it was caught up by the starboard screw and was completely mangled. As a result the ship had to steam to Toronto on only one engine.

When the news of the Wizard's problems reached Toronto, Lt(N) Jack McQuarrie, the local diving officer was ordered to get YORK's dive team ready to free up the fowled propeller. As the team arrived at the ship and inspected the problem, they saw that the heavy steel berthing line had been chewed into fragments which had been forced in between the streamline rear-fairing and the propeller. Lt(N) McQuarrie said, "We would have to remove this fairing to free the large quantity of thick sharp steel strands which had been dragged in." However, there was a significant problem to deal with. The large bolts holding the fairing in place had been welded to prevent them from working loose with all the normal shaft motion.



Without power tools available, the welds would have to be cut with a hammer and cold chisel. Swinging a 2lbs hammer for any length of time can be tiring on the surface. Underwater it is a significant challenge. Then there is the problem of support. On land our bodies are held in place by the force of gravity, but here for all practical purposes, they were weightless. There was no alternative but to rig some kind of platform under the ship in such a position that they could secure themselves, when hammering, and wrapping their legs around it. "It was awkward, but it worked," McQuarrie stated. Taking turns chiseling away for many hours, they removed the fairing and all the fragments of the berthing rope and then finally the replacing the

fairing. Lt(N) McQuarrie said that when the work was completed, Wizard's Captain presented him with a photograph of the ship with the following inscription, "In gratitude for a splendid diving operation. Toronto, 30th August 1968"

Switch forward 30 years, and LCdr Jack McQuarrie is at a Royal Naval Association meeting at the Naval Club in Toronto. He goes to look at a photo of HMS Wizard on display and runs into Don Ashfield who served on the Wizard during that very training trip in 1963. When the ship was stuck in Toronto, he was ordered to take the public on tours of the ship. It was that day he met a young lady named Annette. And if it wasn't for a disgruntled line handler, he would not have met his wife of 50 years!

Making History: 100th Anniversary of the Armistice



On Sunday November 11, 2018, HMCS YORK along with the Toronto Garrison travelled down the streets of Toronto to mark the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War I. It was only fitting that this important day also took place on a Sunday 100 years ago. The marching contingent formed up at Maple Leaf Square on Bremner Blvd and made its way up University Avenue past the war memorial. As they reached Queen Street, the joint Army/Navy Band separated divisions sending the Army to City Hall as the Navy continued on to Queens Park.

