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# Paved with Good Intentions: HMCS Uganda, the Pacific War, and the Volunteer Issue

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# Paved with Good Intentions HMCS *Uganda*, the Pacific War, and the Volunteer Issue

**Bill Rawling**

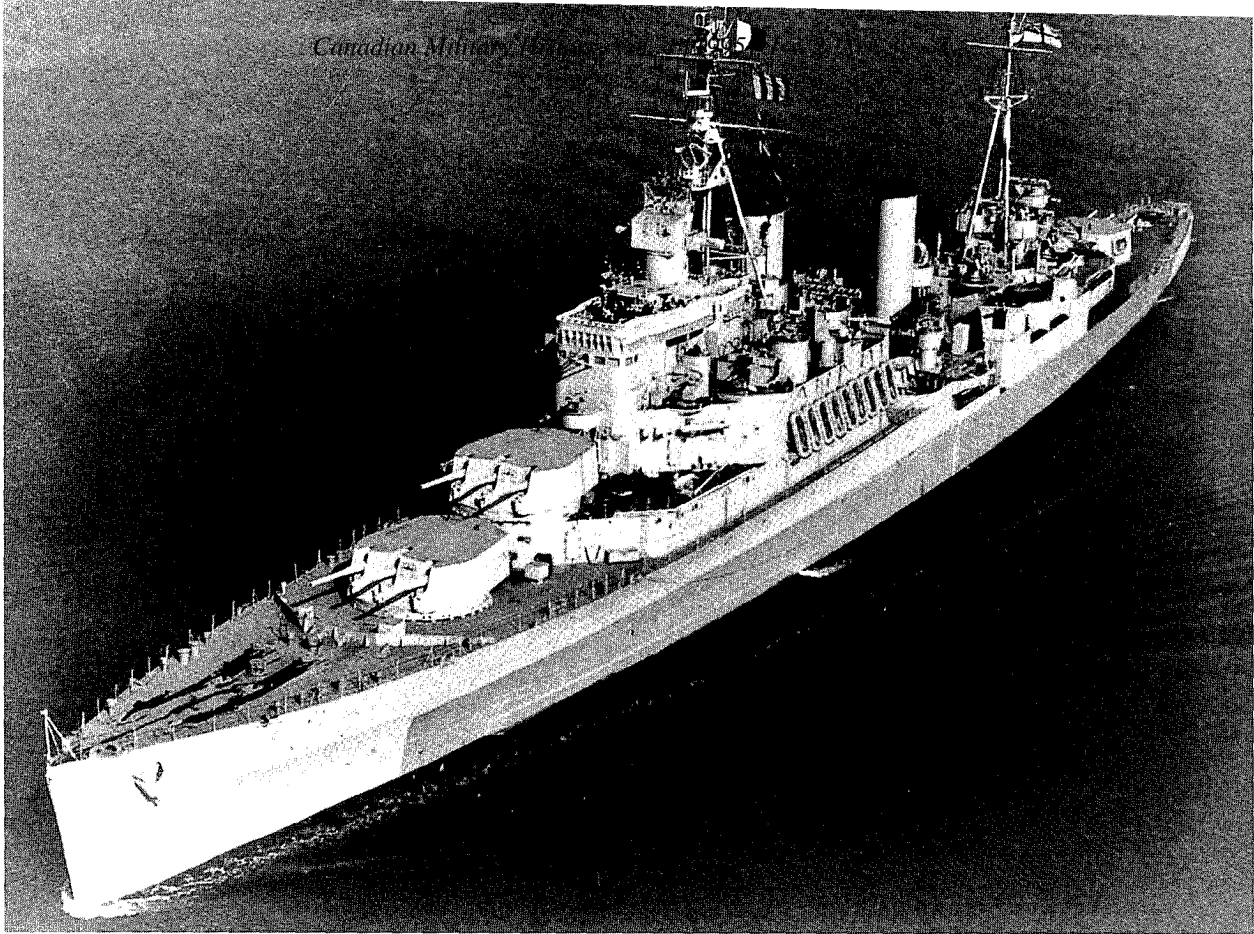
Admirals and politicians alike must have awniced at the headlines: "PACIFIC SERVICE PROTEST" was splashed across the *Daily Sketch*; "PACIFIC? NOT US!" proclaimed the *Evening News*, in one of the worst public relations disasters the Royal Canadian Navy faced during the Second World War. As the two newspapers – among many others – explained, the crew of one of Canada's two cruisers, HMCS *Uganda*, while on operations in the Pacific theatre, refused to volunteer for further service when requested, forcing the ship to return to port. There were, however, no accusations of cowardice or disloyalty, either explicit or implied; rather, the press explained, "The crew...had volunteered for service anywhere when they enlisted originally. They resented being asked to volunteer again." The result was that, when war ended in the Pacific on 14 August 1945, Canada had no ship to represent it there, despite plans that at one point had called for a fleet of 60 war vessels.

The RCN had sought to build a balanced fleet since its inception in 1910, and its hopes seemed to be taking steps towards fruition with the commissioning of HMCS *Uganda* on Trafalgar Day, 1944. Soon complete with a complement of 900, the *Fiji*-class cruiser then made its way to the United Kingdom for trials in January 1945, and proceeded to the Mediterranean for further training. Joining the British Pacific Fleet (BPF) in the first days of April, Canada's sole representative in that theatre helped fight off kamikaze attacks and engaged land targets with its nine six-inch guns as part of the BPF's supporting role in the US invasion of Okinawa.

After a month of such operations, *Uganda* seemed to be fitting in well with the Royal Navy task force, though the threat of suicide attack never failed to generate much discussion on the art and science of survival in the face of a determined foe.

The enemy was not, however, *Uganda's* only concern at this time, political developments at home promised to affect the ship's destiny. Canada's wartime navy was made up entirely of volunteers (or general service – GS – personnel), as was its air force, and these could be sent to any theatre of war as determined by operational requirements. But, in late March 1945, there were intimations in Cabinet that, with the defeat of Hitler near, the scale of Canada's contribution to the fight against totalitarianism would diminish somewhat. Government policy would thus place limitations on what could be done with Canadians serving in the RCN. On the 22nd, with the Prime Minister absent due to illness, the War Committee was informed of his views:

The Secretary reported that the Prime Minister proposed to make a short statement in Parliament, in the near future, on the government's intentions as to Canadian participation in the war against Japan...The statement would inform the House that there would be no conscription for service in the Pacific, that Naval and Air Force units to be despatched to that theatre would be constituted on a voluntary basis, and that the Army contingent would be made up of volunteers, plus short service GS personnel; no difficulty was anticipated in obtaining the numbers of personnel required for any of the three Services.<sup>1</sup>



Two views of HMCS Uganda, November 1944.

(Photos by US Navy, NAC PA 107875 & 115789)

Subsequent meetings agreed that King's proposed statement would require substantial revisions, "particularly in relation to those paragraphs which dealt with the method of selecting personnel for the Pacific contingents; in this respect government policy was not clear."<sup>2</sup>

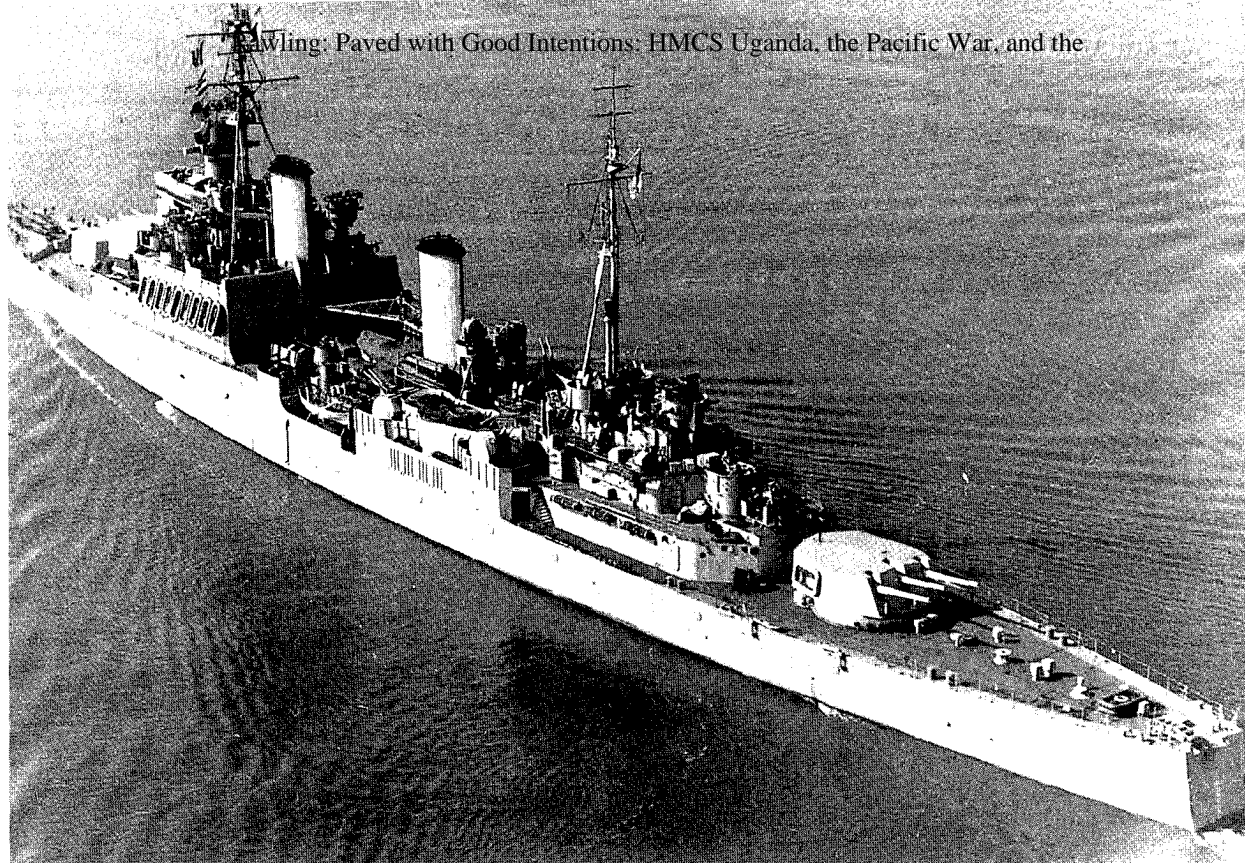
Some ambiguity was perhaps necessary to maintain Cabinet solidarity, for ministers had been bitterly divided on the conscription issue in the past, and King wanted to avoid the kind of acrimony that had led to the resignation of the minister of defence the previous year. At the end of the month, according to the prime minister's diary,

I brought up a statement drafted by Heeny and Pope regarding Canada's contribution in the Japanese war. It raised the old question of conscription anew. Macdonald [minister of defence for the naval services] in particular maintained that we must have conscription on principle. Ilsley also stated strongly that he was indifferent. Either the government should have conscription of NRMA men for Japan as well as volunteers for general service, or else have avowedly an indefinite statement as to numbers, but an avowed statement as to no

conscription for the Japanese war...I spoke of my talk with the President, in which he spoke of our navy possibly controlling the Kuriles and our soldiers helping to drive the Japanese out of Manchuria and other parts of China, and how I had felt indignant at his even proposing anything of the kind...I took strongly the position that to create a conscription issue over Japan before a general election would be just suicidal and absolutely wrong...[McNaughton] stated emphatically that we should include mention that no one would be sent overseas until after their return to Canada and a month's vacation here...I pointed out that the mere desire of having token contribution for prestige purposes was not sufficient reason for raising the conscription issue or indeed needlessly sacrificing lives.

It was finally decided to have Pope, Heeny and the Chiefs of Staff revise the memo in light of the discussion, making clear that whatever was done for the Japanese war would be on a voluntary basis, thereby avoiding the question of conscription of NRMA men or voluntary enlistment or any pressure of general service men for voluntary enlistment. It was suggested that the army contribution might be made up of men who would wish to be permanently in the army.

I am coming to feel that if the worst comes to the worst, rather than have the issue of



conscription raised in the election, I would cut out any contribution from the army, especially as we would be retaining one or two divisions for a couple of years in Europe...Macdonald was left by himself in arguing for conscription. He made the statement he would only be in the government for a short time longer in any event...Certainly there will be no conscription for the Far East in any government of which I may be the head.<sup>3</sup>

The main contention seemed to be whether or not to conscript men into the army's Far East contingent, which would not affect the RCN's contribution in any way, but the whole issue of what constituted a "volunteer" was about to come under closer scrutiny, with serious repercussions on *Uganda*.

The issue evolved quickly in the first days of April, with Cabinet quietly assenting that there would be no mention of conscription in the prime minister's upcoming statement in the House. It was still, however, left to determine whether "the general service men were to be considered as having enlisted for Japan or whether they would have to re-volunteer to go into the war against Japan."<sup>4</sup> The final decision on the matter was communicated in King's speech to the House of Commons the next day:

These navy, army and air force contingents will be formed in part from personnel now serving abroad and in part from personnel now training in Canada. It is not intended to detail men for service in the Pacific. This applies to general service personnel as well as to all others. The men to make up whatever military force is to be employed against Japan will be chosen from those who elect to serve in the Pacific theatre.

No one serving in the European theatre will proceed to the Pacific without first having the opportunity of coming home. All personnel returning from abroad will be granted thirty day's disembarkation leave, in addition to any normal leave to which they may become entitled during their period of duty in Canada while the several forces are being reorganized.<sup>5</sup>

Thus only those specifically volunteering for Pacific duty would be sent to that theatre.

In the debate that followed, Angus Macdonald, the navy minister, was asked how this would apply to ships already in the Pacific (i.e. *Uganda*), and he replied simply that all members of the RCN were volunteers; when pressed, however, he answered in a slightly different vein:

That ship has been in commission now for six months, and I should think that during the summer or fall, assuming the European war to

be over, if some men on board the *Uganda* feel they should return home, we would allow them to do so if we felt that we could replace them. Perhaps I should not make that broad statement, but I should think very sympathetic consideration would be given any man on the *Uganda* who, having put in a year of service on that ship, and the European war being over, wished to return to civilian life. I think such a request would be very carefully and sympathetically dealt with.<sup>6</sup>

No one in the House seems to have noticed that Macdonald's reply was, in fact, a contradiction of the policy the prime minister had just presented. A Conservative MP, however, John Diefenbaker, did point out that sorting out the volunteer issue aboard *Uganda* might be more difficult than the navy minister was letting on.<sup>7</sup>

Macdonald's role in the affair is of some interest, especially when one considers that, as navy minister, it does not seem to have occurred to him that his government's insistence on sending to the Pacific only those who specifically volunteered to serve there might create problems. His performance in the House, where he seems to have forgotten that *Uganda's* crew could either decline to volunteer or return to Canada for 30 days' leave, also casts doubt on his ability to focus on naval issues. One can surmise that his heart was no longer in his job, Macdonald having decided as early as 1943 not to stand for re-election, no doubt partly due to the strains of war that took a toll of many policy makers.

Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ) was another matter, and had not been taken completely by surprise by the government's volunteer policy. As early as the previous November, staff officers had considered the possible ramifications of using volunteers, and had attempted to determine how long it would take to find crews for the Pacific ships. According to their hypothetical plan, as soon as authorization came from Cabinet, a signal would be sent to ascertain who would be willing to serve against Japan, requiring about six weeks for various replies to come in; then a further two weeks would be needed to summarize the returns. Another six would allow the RCN depot to commence drafting crews to their vessels, with a further month allocated to allowing volunteers leave in Canada. Total time required was thus some five and a half months "from the date the

complement is authorized and a clear Government policy is released until the rating will actually join his ship."<sup>8</sup>

Having been informed of the government's policy to send volunteers exclusively, NSHQ thus required only two weeks to issue its directives:

It is the intention that the RCN contribution to the war against Japan will be limited to modern and effective men of war such as cruisers, carriers, destroyers and frigates. If these ships are to be manned effectively, a high percentage of personnel at present serving, will be required as volunteers to enable the most suitable selection to be made....

It is therefore necessary for all repetition all personnel to state whether or not they are willing to volunteer for service in the Far East....

Any who do not volunteer or who do volunteer but are not selected for service in the Pacific Theatre, will continue to serve as required elsewhere subject to eventual release....

Commanding officers are to explain the situation, and give all officers and ratings an opportunity to sign the following undertaking. "I hereby volunteer for service in the war against Japan and agree to serve in the Pacific Theatre and/or any other theatre for the duration of hostilities should my services be so required."<sup>9</sup>

Some were far from sanguine as to the results, and "It is the general opinion of Senior Canadian Officers overseas that the percentage of volunteers will be disappointingly low. Possible early promulgation of the Department's intention to provide additional financial or other inducements for service in the Pacific might have a beneficial effect."<sup>10</sup>

**Opposite:** *Aspects of crew life aboard HMCS Uganda.*

**Top Left:** Voluntary physical training on the quarterdeck of HMCS *Uganda*.

(NAC PA 136082)

**Top Right:** Sailors pose for a photo.

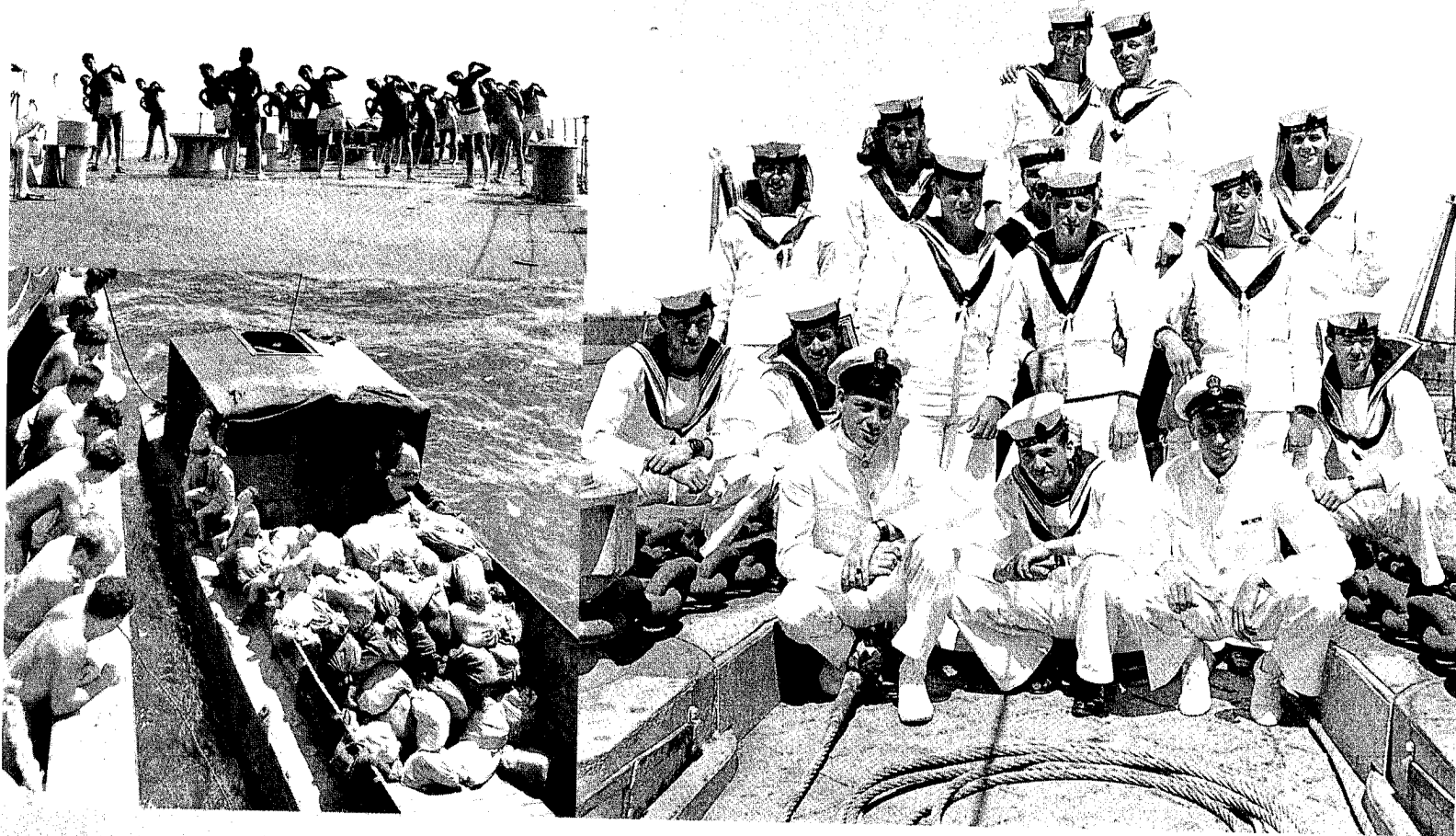
(NAC PA 177922)

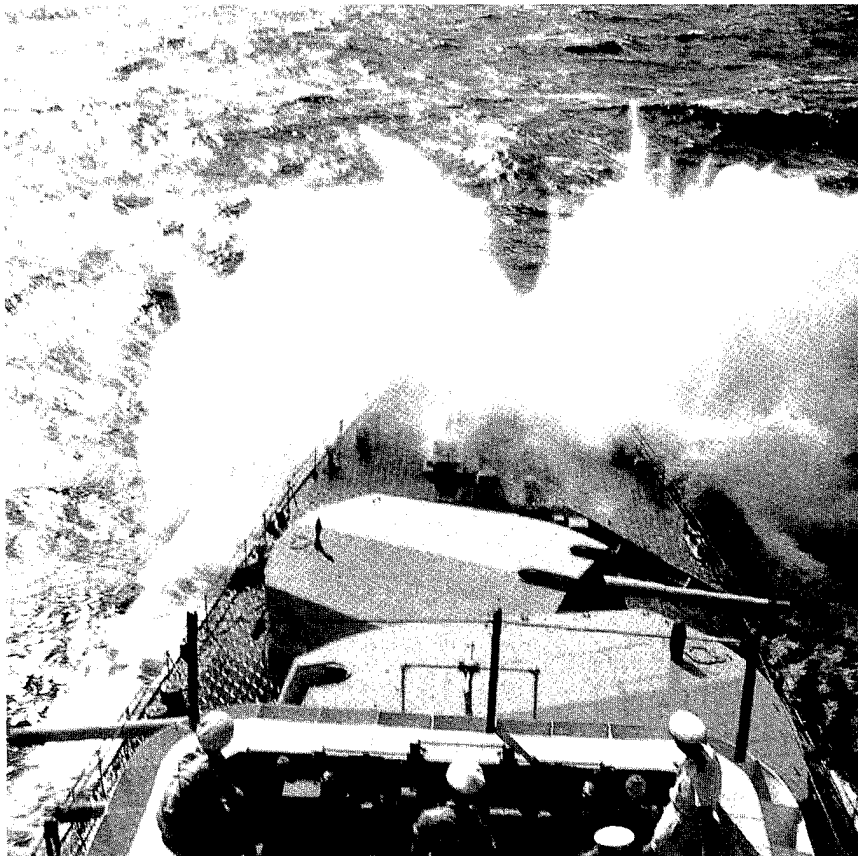
**Centre Left:** Bags of mail come alongside HMCS *Uganda*.

(NAC PA 136084)

**Bottom:** The funeral at sea of Stoker Phillips.

(NAC PA 132982)





Waves crash over the bow of HMCS *Uganda* as she dips into a choppy sea.

(NAC PA 136085)

Procedures to determine who was willing to serve against the Japanese were soon in place, instructions to the RCN's depot in the UK being to "interrogate every officer and rating reporting to HMCS *Niobe* and if they have not already recorded their decision you will obtain from them the requisite declaration. If they do not sign the declaration their names should be included in the negative lists."<sup>11</sup> That was fine for a shore establishment, but there was a potential for severe complications where ships at sea were concerned, as suggested by the Canadian Naval Mission Overseas. "Information is also desired as to what will be the status of personnel in *Uganda* or any other Canadian ships such as *Ontario* and *Prince Robert* which may be in the Pacific theatre after the German defeat. Is it NSHQ's intention to replace personnel who do not volunteer for service in the Pacific and to give leave in Canada to Personnel who do volunteer? If this is so is it intended to withdraw these ships to Canada or deal with reliefs and leave on an individual draft basis?"<sup>12</sup> An answer was not yet forthcoming.

In early May, the RCN's plans for its fleet in the Pacific called for two light fleet carriers, two cruisers, seventeen destroyers, thirty-six

frigates, and eight corvettes, requiring 13,400 crew with 4,000 reserves. Far more would have to volunteer, however, to ensure the requisite number could be selected, as Captain F.L. Houghton, Canada's Naval Liaison Officer in London, pointed out:

It will be appreciated that in order to obtain the correct substantive and non-substantive rates to man ships intended for the Pacific it will probably be necessary for at least three-fifths of our present 90,000 personnel to volunteer for the Japanese War and it is the duty of every Commanding Officer to ensure that all officers and men are fully aware of the situation in all its aspects. It is only in this way that they will be able to make their decisions fairly and with a full realization of the implications. It is not a question of forcing men to volunteer but of giving them all the possible facts of the case. As further information is received from NSHQ it will be promulgated by signal and if as a result of such information any personnel who previously did not wish to volunteer desire to change their minds this should be encouraged and amended returns forwarded.<sup>13</sup>

It soon became evident, however, that getting over 50,000 naval personnel to re-enlist would be no easy matter, and not just for the reasons anticipated by the government.

For there were rumblings within the RCN, Acting Lieutenant-Commander W.H. Willson, captain of HMCS *Kootenay*, being one of the most vocal:

I HAVE THE HONOUR TO SUBMIT, that the following complaint against instructions received from a superior authority may be considered...The instructions that Permanent Force Officers are to sign undertakings for service in the Far East appear irregular and detrimental to the dignity of a Naval Officer...I do not feel that as an officer of the Royal Canadian Navy I should be called upon to sign a contract binding me to do the work which I joined the Service to do...The demand that Officers of the Royal Canadian Navy sign this statement insinuates that there is some doubt as to whether officers holding His Majesty's Commission can be relied upon to do the duty for which, in years of peace, they are constantly preparing themselves...It is requested to know whether my superior officers consider me so lacking in sense of responsibility as to deem it necessary to solicit my services and require a contract signed before a witness to hold me to my duty.<sup>14</sup>

Commander Willson submitted a formal request for transfer to the Pacific in lieu of the re-attestation. A report to the Naval Board suggested that "this officer undoubtedly expresses sentiments felt by all officers of the permanent RCN," and that most "have signed the required undertaking in good faith only because they understand that it is the policy of the Canadian Government that no officer or man may be appointed to serve in the Japanese War unless he has signed the proper form."<sup>15</sup> Willson was, however, reprimanded.<sup>16</sup>

The results of such ill-feeling could be seen in the cruiser HMCS *Ontario*, fitting-out for Far Eastern services, but which in May had not yet made its way to the Pacific. Canvassing found 512 willing to fight the Japanese and 388 unwilling; thus "The announcement that only volunteers would be sent to the Pacific was catastrophic in its effect on draft to *Ontario* which had previously looked forward to impending events with enthusiasm."<sup>17</sup> There was little sentiment of war-weariness, rather a feeling that volunteers would lose the benefits of machinery set up for demobilization on a priority basis; also, many had already promised wives and dependents that they would return home as soon as possible, so felt

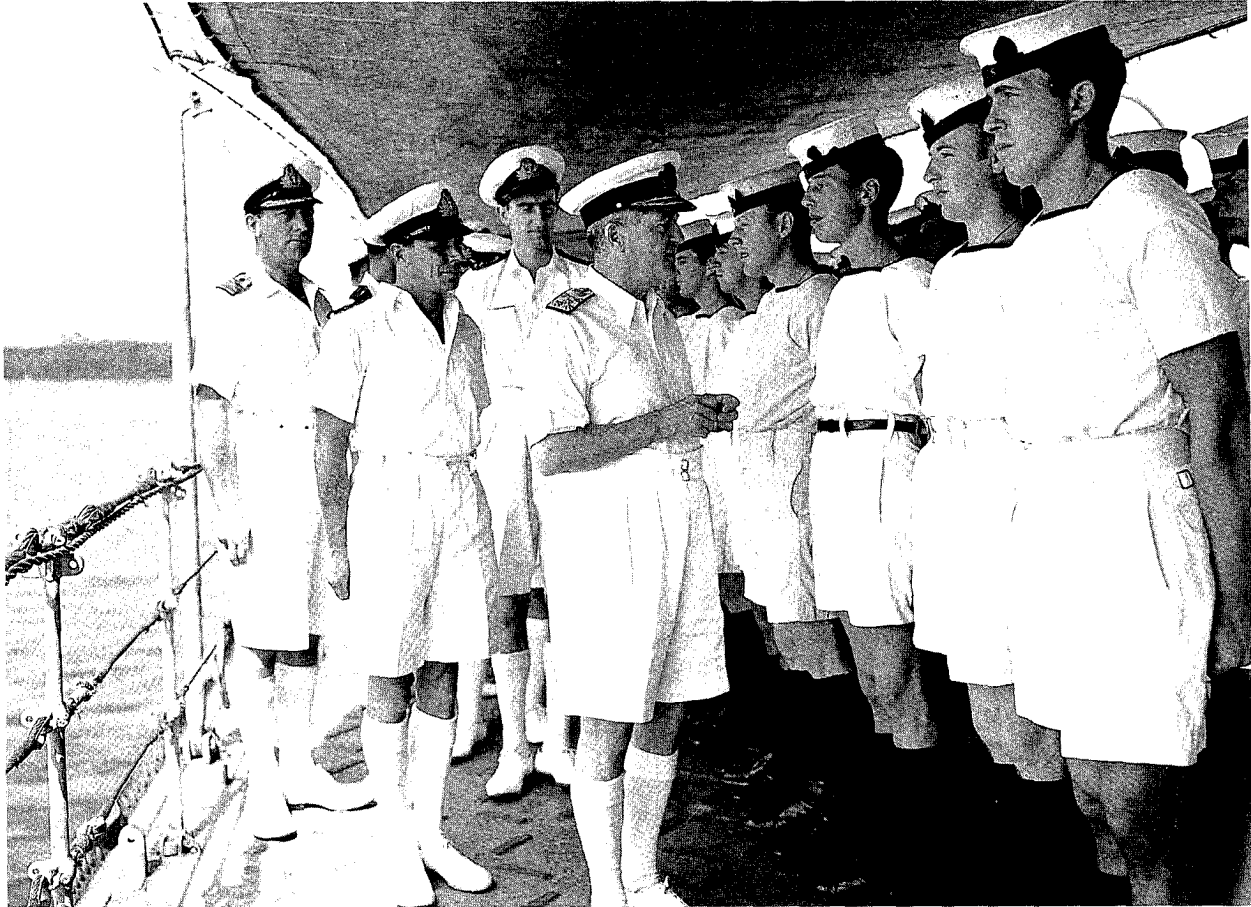
uneasy about putting their names to new attestation papers; further, there was a general concern that non-volunteers would be in a more advantageous position when it came to getting post-war jobs.<sup>18</sup> Given the disincentives to volunteering, the fact that 57% of the ship's crew did so can be considered a major testament to their dedication – or sense of adventure.

*Uganda's* case was far more difficult, as there were no replacements at hand should a large portion of the crew choose not to volunteer – and those who did were still eligible for a months' leave in Canada. As the ship's captain, Edmond Rollo Mainguy, related several decades later, feelings aboard his cruiser echoed those of *Ontario*:

We were busy shooting the Japanese islands and we got a signal saying that the war was over in Europe and we were to splice the mainbrace. We couldn't do that in the war zone so we saved it up. The next signal we got fairly shortly was: "Do you volunteer to fight against the Japanese?" It seemed pretty stupid. Anyway we got this signal. We couldn't understand what it meant. And after great exchange of signals, we were given orders finally that we had to vote. Everybody on board votes secretly as to whether or not they volunteered to fight against the Japanese. If they said yes, they'd get 30 days leave. Well, that sounded a bit improbable as we were already fighting. So the way this signal and exchange of the signal was received annoyed everybody, every single soul on board. The permanent force were insulted because they'd spent all their lives getting ready for a war and then, when in the middle of the war, we were asked whether we wanted to go on and finish it. All the Reserves and everybody else had volunteered for the duration of hostilities, and if we were fighting against Japan, of course we'd go on. So from one point of view, there were those two main incentives just to be annoyed and say, "Well, if we're not wanted, of course, we don't want to fight the Japs if it's not necessary." Then there were those who thought if they said yes and their wives heard about this, that they'd volunteered to go on fighting Japan when they could have gone home, there would be trouble there. The single men on board all thought a lot of people are going to say no and if we don't go home, we're going to miss out on a lot of civilian jobs, so we'll say no.<sup>19</sup>

Mainguy, like many others, described the events of those days over four decades after they had occurred, and accounts differ as to how the vote came about. Lieutenant Ernest Chadwick





Captain E.R. Mainguy inspects the crew of his ship.

(NAC PA 177921)

suggests that the captain “decided they would ask anybody who did *not* want to volunteer to hand their names in and next time we refuelled from the fleet train we’d put them on the fleet train and they could go home. The troops actually, seemed to accept that.” But officialdom did not, and insisted it wanted a list of those who *did* wish to volunteer; Mainguy’s reaction was to announce, in the first days of May, that procedures would be implemented to determine who wished to serve in the war against Japan.

What he said next is a matter of some confusion, for it seems that the captain noted, publicly, that he would have little respect for those who might decide to quit while the ship was on operations, which according to Chadwick, “was a bad thing. That finished it. And the next morning the Commander’s office flat was just flooded with non-volunteers.”<sup>20</sup> The captain’s remarks may well have been a factor in the crew’s decision, another witness insisting

in his diary that the “Skipper made speeches and turned the men against him more than ever. Called us foreflushers and quitters. Those who were in doubt soon made up their minds at a statement like that.”<sup>21</sup> Able Seaman Andrew Lawson agreed, remembering that Mainguy was held in high regard by the crew, but that his speech may have put the men off nonetheless.<sup>22</sup> According to another, when it was announced they would have to vote on whether to stay or leave, “everybody more or less laughed about it. They couldn’t believe it. But the captain made the announcement and explained what had to be done. So we took the vote and the vote said, we were finished...[Before the vote the captain] actually made some nasty remarks (which was probably a mistake) about anybody who didn’t volunteer to stay there.”<sup>23</sup> Ironically, that same witness, Lieutenant Hugh Makovski, also claimed that “As a matter of fact we would have had to leave about the time we did anyway,

because we had been at sea then just under a year [sic –actually seven months] and we had been travelling a good part of that time at 30-knots. The chief engineer told Mainguy when he was coming home that no matter where we went he'd have to go in for a refit because he couldn't guarantee more than 20-knots when we left there,"<sup>24</sup> though there is no corroborating evidence for this.

Whether or not Mainguy's remarks to the crew affected their decision, he was not the only one to suggest that they still had a duty to perform. As Lieutenant William Landymore recalled,

Well, I think that at some levels there was some bad feeling. It never occurred to me not to volunteer. As a regular force officer there was no difficulty in the decision...And as far as my own activity was concerned – I called together all my Gunnery Chiefs and POs and I said, "It may occur to you, some of you who aren't regular force people (or permanent force we called them then) may feel it's better to go home and get the leave that's been promised and the big money and all that sort of stuff. But I'm sure that if you do, if you don't volunteer for service in the Pacific and if a sufficient number do that – the ship will have to go home. No matter what you think about it now, you're going to regret it all your life. You're going to be sorry you made that decision. Because it doesn't matter how you rationalize it, there's something in the view that, in the face of the enemy, you're turning your back. And I'm sure that if you reflect on this long enough, you'll decide that this isn't the way to do it."<sup>25</sup>

In the event, 576 ratings and 29 officers opted not to volunteer, one of them, Able Seaman Andrew A. Lawson, echoing the views of W.H. Willson a month before: "Why should we volunteer again. We volunteered once to get here. We were quite happy to stay here. We'll do our job that we're supposed to do and then go home...I was one of the ones who did *not* volunteer. I was prepared to stay there, but if they were going through this nonsense of volunteering (which was all it was) I wasn't going to volunteer again. They could send me to China, Timbuctu, if they wanted, I belonged to them for the duration of the war."<sup>26</sup>

Fifty years after the fact, Stephen Geneja, a member of *Uganda's* crew at the time of the "vote," reviewed events with some of his comrades, who offered additional reasons for refusing to volunteer. First, after entering the tropics, many sailors began suffering from

respiratory problems, especially those working in extremely hot engine rooms. "Some of the stokers had served in up to five other naval ships in the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans and had not been bothered with any breathing problems."<sup>27</sup> The strains of operating in the Pacific, far from any home port, may have made a bad situation worse, Geneja reporting that a combination of "Absence of shore leave, dehydrated food, lack of fresh vegetables, fruit, and meat, a continuous shortage of fresh water, and too "pusser" [rigorous] a routine when not in action were other reasons given."<sup>28</sup>

Naturally, in the days and weeks that followed, there was much speculation as to what would happen next.<sup>29</sup> The Commander-in-Chief of the British Pacific Fleet, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, contacted NSHQ: "Understand 576 ratings of Uganda must be relieved in the near future as they are not volunteers for service in the Pacific...As this is a large number, request I may be informed when and where the first draft of reliefs may be expected so that arrangements can be made with the least interference with operational readiness."<sup>30</sup> A few days later it became clear that replacing two-thirds of the ship's crew could not be done through the normal channels of reliefs, and the Admiralty concurred in a suggestion that *Uganda* return to Canada to take on a volunteer crew as soon as operational requirements allowed.<sup>31</sup> In early June the wheels of naval administration turned with commendable efficiency, and a draft of about six hundred left Halifax for Esquimalt.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile, *Uganda's* war of shore bombardment and anti-kamikaze work continued, though morale had suffered somewhat when volunteering sheep had been separated from non-volunteering goats. The atmosphere thus generated "has been and remains our only major problem,"<sup>33</sup> and could not have improved in early June when two-thirds of the crew again declined to volunteer when official re-attestation papers were presented to them. At the same time, headquarters in Ottawa continued to prepare to make a larger contribution, which near the end of June was estimated at two cruisers, two light fleet carriers, an anti-aircraft cruiser, eight Crescent-class destroyers, eleven other destroyers, and a variety of smaller craft by the end of March 1946.<sup>34</sup> For the time being, British

plans foresaw incorporating the two Canadian cruisers into the seven that would make up the 4th Cruiser Squadron, which could be paired with the 2nd Cruiser Squadron being planned at the same time.<sup>35</sup> *Ontario* was expected to have embarked the necessary number of volunteers by mid-July,<sup>36</sup> and though "some of the men did not get the 30-days leave they had coming to them...they understand this will pile up in their favour for later on."<sup>37</sup> *Uganda*, having left the BPF on 27 July, was to work up with its new crew, off Canada's west coast, in the first weeks of September.<sup>38</sup>

So, by mid-summer 1945 the volunteer issue had proved to be a temporary setback – not a severe blow – to the creation of an RCN Pacific fleet, and on 25 July Canadians could be informed of developments in that regard.

HMCS *Uganda* will return to the Pacific theatre of operations in the near future, it was revealed today by Hon. Douglas C. Abbott, Minister of National Defence for Naval Services, in announcing the cruiser's imminent arrival at a West Coast Canadian Port.

Trained replacements for those of *Uganda*'s crew who did not elect to continue to serve in the Far East were selected some time ago, the Navy Minister revealed, and are now on the West Coast awaiting the ship. After a brief "working-up" period in which the newly appointed members of the crew will familiarize themselves with the ship, the cruiser will be on her way to rejoin the British Pacific Fleet.

Referring to *Uganda*'s return to Canada, Mr. Abbott pointed out that the ship completed her "work-ups" early this year, joined the British Pacific Fleet in April, and has been in continuous operation in the Pacific since that time. She was already in Pacific waters when the government announced its policy of sending to the Far East only those who had specifically elected to serve there.

In line with this policy a canvass was made of all naval personnel. Results of this canvass show to date that over 37,000 officers and ratings have volunteered to serve in the Pacific theatre [not the 50,000 hoped for]. Latest available information shows that approximately 25 per cent of *Uganda*'s crew have volunteered to continue to serve in that theatre. The Navy Minister said, however, that this figure is subject to revision when the ship reaches port. This means that provision has been made for the replacement of some 600 officers and men.

The possibility of sending replacements to a base in the Pacific to join the ship was considered, the Minister said; but the British Commander-in-Chief felt it advisable to put replacements on board in Canada, where necessary "working-up" exercises could be conducted in non-operational waters.

Mr. Abbott emphasized that *Uganda* was returning to Canada on orders of the Commander-in-Chief of the British Pacific Fleet under whose control she was operating; and that the order for her return had been issued on completion of the operations in which she was engaged.<sup>39</sup>

Though the *Halifax Chronicle* referred to the affair as "an unparalleled piece of ineptitude in naval administration,"<sup>40</sup> it looked as if the situation would soon be put right. *Uganda* arrived in Esquimalt on 10 August,<sup>41</sup> and would be ready to return to the Pacific in a few weeks, but even as the ship was docking two atomic bombs had already been dropped on Japanese cities, and on the 14th Emperor Hirohito broke a tie-vote in the Japanese Cabinet and his government decided to surrender.

The dawn of the nuclear age thus dealt the RCN's prestige a severe blow, there being no Canadian naval units in the Pacific when the war ended. That was not, however, of much importance at the time, the navy's priorities being to acquire a balanced fleet it could retain into the post-war era, and with two cruisers in hand, as well as a light fleet carrier and modern destroyers on the way, it would seem that the naval service had achieved its goals – at least in part. Historically, then, the volunteer debacle is more important in what it says about the conscription issue – more critical in Canadian politics than in just about any other country in the world – and which could have bizarre consequences even in an all-volunteer force thousands of miles distant from the corridors of power.

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## Notes

1. Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, March 22, 1945, National Archives of Canada (NA), Record Group (RG) 2, 7c, v.17.
2. Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, March 29th, 1945, NA, RG 2, 7c, v.17.

3. Mackenzie King Diary, 29 March 1945, NA, MG 26, J13.
4. Mackenzie King Diary, 3 April 1945, NA, MG 26, J13.
5. *Hansard*, 4 April 1945, 435.
6. *Hansard*, 4 April 1945, 439.
7. *Hansard*, 4 April 1945, 440.
8. Chief Naval Personnel to CNS, 7 November 1944, NA, RG 24, v.8150, NSS 1655-2.
9. Naval Service Headquarters (NSHQ) to AIG 138, 19 April 1945, NA, RG 24, v.17,706, 1425-1, v.1.
10. Canadian Naval Mission Overseas (CNMO) to NSHQ, 20 April 1945, NA, RG 24, v.11,751, 46-8-1.
11. CNMO to HMCS *Niobe*, 20 April 1945, NA, RG 24, v.11,706, 1425-1, v.1.
12. CNMO to NSHQ, April 1945, NA, RG 24, v.11,706, 1425-1, v.1.
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### Cambridge Military Library (est. 1817)

Royal Artillery Park, Queen Street  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

This library, possessing historic value and quiet-spoken charm, has a large main hall complete with glass encasements, a fireplace, above which hangs a portrait of the Duke of Cambridge and comfortable appointments of red leather and carpet. A library fit for the military gentlemen of the 1800s, it was founded in 1817 by the Earl of Dalhousie with monies from the Castine Fund. As Halifax's first, this library has had its heyday of social evenings, tennis on the lawn and tea. Now, as the military history library for the area, it serves officers of the Air Force, Army and Navy. It has a collection of

approximately 12,000 books. some of the oldest volumes belong to the Corfu Collection, a gift from the British Government to the officers of the Halifax Garrison. Most of the Main Hall contains about 7,000 volumes of newer material though, with its focus being military history. The library has endeavoured to make Canadian military history, Canadian regimental history and local military history its focus. The Collection has been used as a research library for various publications. The library is open from 0800 to 1600 hours every weekday.