

# Death by Choice or by Chance? U-69 and the first Newfoundland ferry Caribou

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# DEATH BY CHOICE OR BY CHANCE? U-69 and the first Newfoundland ferry *Caribou*

MALCOLM MACLEOD

DURING THE SECOND World War, U-boats, convoys and naval escorts performed an intricately choreographed, tripartite dance of death and evasion which spread further and further across the broad ocean as time passed. The regular railway ferry service between Newfoundland and Nova Scotia itself constituted a convoy route—officially “SPAB” (Sydney-Port aux Basques)<sup>1</sup>—when, in 1942, the submarine war spread to inshore waters and the unlucky ferry *Caribou* was sunk by the equally ill-fated submarine U-69.

## CONVOYS

The first Atlantic Ocean convoy services, implemented at war’s outset, ran between Halifax or Sydney and northern British ports such as Liverpool. By the time the Newfoundland railway ferry was sunk, however, the pattern of convoy services (see Map 1) had been elaborated into a bewildering web.

The complication began when the United States entered the war at the end of 1941. Now Admiral Karl Dönitz, head of German U-boat command, had numerous new targets against which to direct his raiders. He had great success in initial attacks upon oil tanker traffic through the West Indies. Dönitz looked upon the carnage, saw that it was good, and directed some of his undersea fleet to penetrate the inshore waters of the United States and Canada.

In the summer and fall of 1942 Canada suffered a major defeat when it was unable to protect shipping in the Gulf of St. Lawrence from enemy assault. A half-dozen U-boats came into the Gulf and attacked numerous targets. Within the

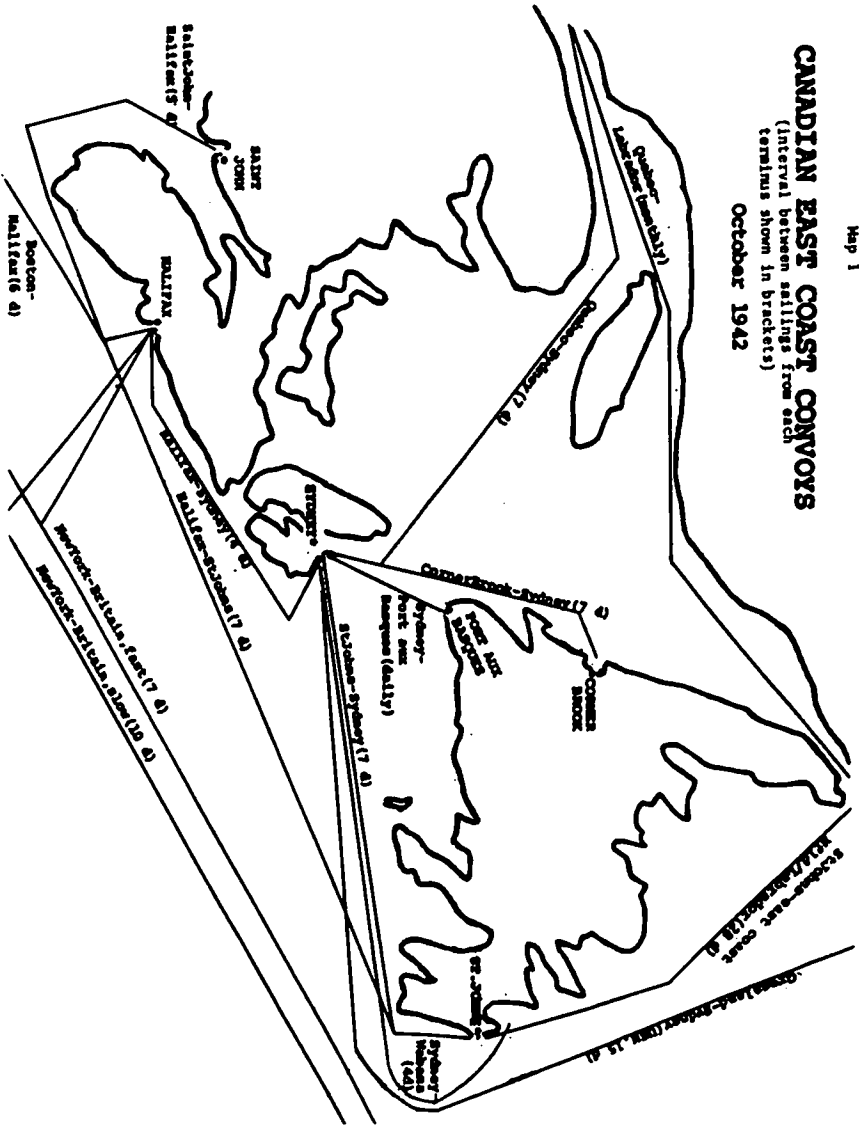
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## CANADIAN EAST COAST CONVAYS

(Interval between sailings from each terminus shown in brackets)

October 1942

Map 1



triangle Rimouski-Port aux Basques-Belle Isle a total of twenty-one sinkings occurred: seventeen freighters, an American troop ship, two Canadian naval vessels and — incurring a heavier toll of casualties than the other twenty targets put together — the venerable *Caribou*, as she approached the completion of seventeen years on the Cabot Strait shuttle service. In the various counter-attacks, no German submarines were sunk, seriously damaged or, often, even located.<sup>2</sup>

In waging the inshore campaign, Canadian authorities were innovative although unsuccessful. For a short time normal navigational lights were extinguished. At the peak of the emergency, all shipping in the Gulf was prohibited. Air Force bases in the region, such as General Reconnaissance School at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, were told to direct training flights over the most sensitive waters.<sup>3</sup> Whether or not airplanes carried anti-submarine weapons, their approach would still put a scare into U-boats and force them to submerge. The principal reaction of the Canadian authorities was to herd coastal shipping into a greatly-expanded system of regular convoys.

A dozen new services were inaugurated in northeastern North America in 1942. They regulated and channelled traffic among the principal ports of concern to Canadian shipping: Boston, Saint John, New Brunswick, Halifax, Sydney, Quebec, Port aux Basques, Corner Brook, St. John's, Wabana, and Goose Bay in Hamilton Inlet, Labrador.

See map 1 (previous page). Protection on these routes was provided by the Royal Canadian Navy. There was also a new convoy service from Cape Breton to Greenland, under U.S. Coast Guard escort.

The usual interval between sailings, from either end of a coastal convoy route, varied from four to seven days. Sydney-Port aux Basques (SPAB) convoy had the busiest schedule, with three sailings per week from each port. The longest services, stretching north to Labrador and even Greenland, sailed at longer intervals, every two or four weeks. Several routes had to be discontinued over winter due to ice conditions, somewhat easing the strain all this new work put upon the available ships and crews.<sup>4</sup>

## U-BOATS

U-boats, the terrors of the seas, were actually quite vulnerable, being more lightly armed than most enemy naval vessels they reasonably expected to encounter. Running submerged cut their speed to nearly one-third of what it would otherwise be, so they operated on the surface whenever it was safe to do so. For example, during the 10,000-mile cruise in September-October 1942, during which she sank the *Caribou*, U-69 ran submerged only ten percent of the time.<sup>5</sup> U-boats almost always operated alone, although they were capable of gathering into "wolf packs" which were the dreaded scourge of allied shipping during 1940-43.

Although submariners through the first years of the war could be nearly positive that the last step in their dance with convoys and escorts would be fatal,

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until that time came they did their best to maintain a high pitch of enthusiasm and morale. Markings on the hull, flag-hoists, and boasts of sailors on leave, told of ships they had sunk. They gave their ships nicknames more meaningful than bureaucratic number-names, with appropriate cartoon-like symbols painted on the conning tower. U-69, for example, was the “laughing cow,” *die lachende kuh*.<sup>6</sup> They wrote high-spirited songs about submarine achievements. Penetration of the Gulf of St. Lawrence — where confined space and shallow water made it at least seem a particularly dangerous place for U-boats to operate — was among the most renowned exploits, remembered in “The Schnorkel” (sung to the tune of “Lili-Marlene”).<sup>7</sup>

1. In the Gulf St. Lawrence, by the narrow spout  
Along comes an old schnorkel, and lifts its cheeky snout  
Right where some big fat ships will steam  
That's where we wait to pierce the screen  
With you, Lili-Marlene; with you, Lili-Marlene.

2. Now the convoy commodore's growling in his beard  
Local strategic thinkers are really rather weird  
But when we're sent on ops once more  
We'll want nothing better than a St. Lawrence shore  
With you, Lili-Marlene.

...

12. Dearest Papa Dönitz, have mercy as we plead  
Grant us please a brand new boat, that's all we really need  
Then we can hit the road once more  
And add more shipping to our tonnage score  
With you Lili-Marlene.

### U-69

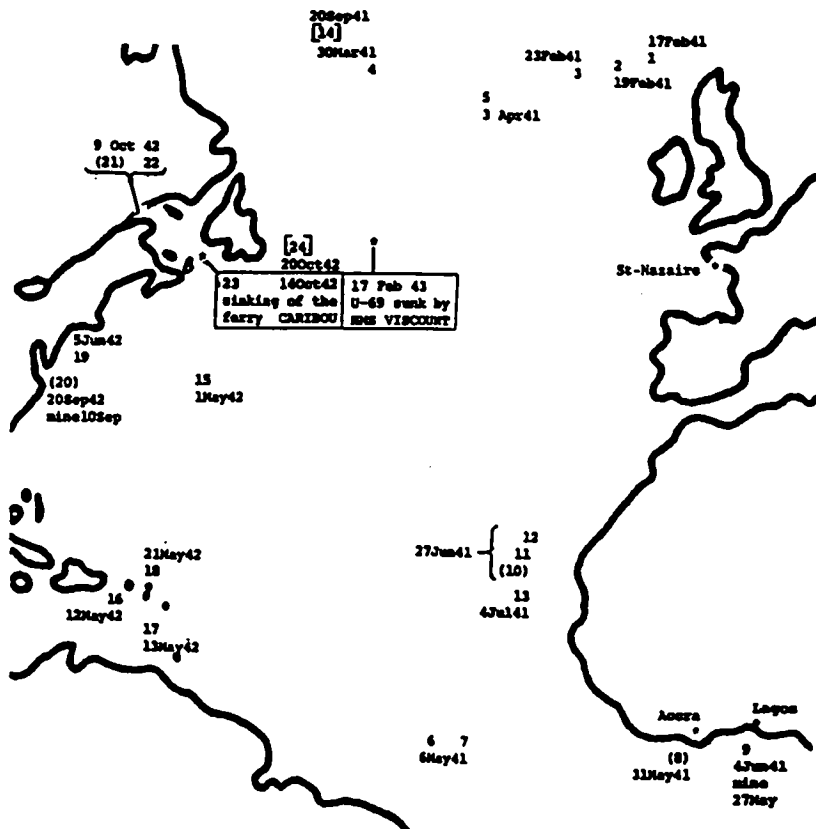
The U-69, built at Kiel in 1940, was a class-VII submarine of 769 tons, 220 feet long. Two diesel engines gave a top speed of seventeen knots on the surface; electric motors drove her, but only for a limited time, at up to 7.5 knots submerged. There were four torpedo tubes in the front of the ship, and one aft. The outfit for a normal cruise was fourteen twenty-one inch diameter torpedoes. Each was two tons, with high explosives comprising nearly half the weight. There were forty-four men in the crew.<sup>8</sup>

When she sank the *Caribou*, U-69 was in the twentieth month of an operational career of precisely two years (see Map 2, next page). The submarine's first sinking occurred in far northern waters beyond the north coast of Scotland, on 17 February 1941. Exactly two years later, 17 February 1943, she herself was sunk with all

Map 2

WAR OPERATIONS OF U-69  
6 patrols 1941-1943

24 attacks  
18 enemy vessels sunk  
{ } target salvaged  
[ ] dud torpedo



hands in mid-Atlantic east of the Grand Banks, by the British destroyer *HMS Viscount*.

During that time U-69's attacks on enemy vessels averaged one per month. Eighteen of these ships went to the bottom, *Caribou* the last such dismal triumph. In a half-dozen cases the target vessel was salvaged and repaired or, worse, torpedoes failed to explode. The submarine's six patrols took her from the coast of West Africa and the West Indies to Greenland, and on mine-laying missions in the

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anchorage of Takoradi (west Ghana), Lagos, and Chesapeake Bay, as well as into the inshore waters of Canada/Newfoundland.<sup>9</sup>

On the second-last operational mission — the last from which she would return safely — U-69 sailed from her base at St-Nazaire on the Atlantic coast of France in the late summer of 1942. The orders were exciting and unusual. Her first task was to penetrate much-travelled Chesapeake Bay, and lay a nest of mines to attack shipping in and out of Baltimore. This job Captain Ulrich Graf and his crew carried out during the second week of September.<sup>10</sup> Thereafter, Graf was instructed to choose his own operational area. It was therefore as somewhat of a rogue or unpredictable wild card, that U-69 entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence, sliding past St. Paul's Island on 30 September.

Initial prospects were not bright. For a full week of frustration no shipping came into view. On 9 October, however, the U-boat discovered a Quebec-Labrador convoy near Matane, 100 kilometres above Anticosti. In an intense operation U-69 torpedoed in quick succession two freighters of the group, sinking one of them — the 2200-ton Finnish steamer *Carolus* filled with construction materials for Goose Bay — then easily evaded the naval escort's counter-attack.

After this success U-69 found that air patrols, previously irksome, now became insufferable. Each time it surfaced, the boat's air radar warning device quickly began to bleat. Captain Graf headed his ship back out to the ocean, until, near St. Paul's Island again, on 13 October he received a message by radio from U-boat headquarters to be on the watch for several grain ships known to be in-bound for Montreal. He decided to patrol that night near the north tip of Cape Breton Island. Thus it was that, with no particular knowledge of how regular was the schedule of the Newfoundland rail ferry — sailings every evening around 7 p.m., from one side of Cabot Strait or the other — the U-boat just happened to cross her path.

### CARIBOU

On the service across Cabot Strait, the *Caribou* had replaced the famous steamer *Kyle* in 1925. Unlike most previous vessels on the run over to Cape Breton, this ship "was no second-hand tramp, no middle-aged refugee from the Firth of Clyde, no part-time sealer or potential exile to the White Sea."<sup>11</sup> The *Caribou* was shiny-new and custom-built as a railway ferry. She was constructed at Rotterdam, christened there 9 June 1925 by Marguerite Bennett — daughter of Newfoundland Colonial Secretary J.R. Bennett — shortly after the government party had officially inaugurated the colony's World War I memorial park at Beaumont Hamel, where another caribou presides.

The ferry was 266 feet long, 2222 tons, with accommodation for 400 passengers and fifty rail cars.<sup>12</sup> She had one refrigerated hold. Top speed was fourteen knots. From 1928 on, as the ferry journeyed back and forth between Cape Breton and southwest Newfoundland, usually at a more sedate clip, the captain was Ben Taverner of Trinity.

*Caribou* had two faults. One was that she was metric. The Newfoundland government had placed the order for their proud new steamer at a shipyard in the Netherlands because the cost there was a full eight percent less than she would have cost if constructed in Britain. According to a Canadian parliamentarian during one of Ottawa's infrequent discussions of links with the Dominion next door, Newfoundland authorities

never ceased to regret having purchased the ship from a continental yard... All the measurements in connection with the machinery are metric. There is nothing standardized about the vessel corresponding with the standards obtaining in this country or in Great Britain, and when a piece, be it valve, piston ring or boiler ferule is wanted,<sup>13</sup>

the only recourse was to place an order with a distant supplier and then endure a lengthy wait.

*Caribou* lacked radar, but that was no fault — not in 1925, and not in 1942, when radar was being rapidly developed and improved. Wartime priorities allocated the scarce sets to warships before merchant vessels. Even HMCS *Grandmere*, the Canadian minesweeper assigned to SPAB convoy escort duties, which was getting up steam in the late afternoon of 13 October as both ships prepared to sail, did not yet have radar. Available sets were going first to ships on trans-Atlantic escort service, out of Halifax and St. John's.

It seemed smart management to burn coal in a ship that called three times a week at Sydney, coal capital of eastern Canada. Good economy in peacetime, however, proved worrisome in a world at war. *Caribou* made a lot of smoke. She crossed the Strait as ancient Israelites traversed the desert, accompanied by a pillar of cloud, in her case, black. This was her second fault.

Everyone remarked upon it. Captain Taverner often expressed the wish that his ship did not so advertise her presence. Lieutenant James Cuthbert, recently-arrived Scots immigrant who had joined the Canadian navy and was commanding officer of *Grandmere*, logged a similar wish. And off Cape North just after midnight, Captain Graf of the U-69 saw, against the grey sky fifteen kilometres away, a darker column rising up, hardly stirred by the light winds of a pleasant autumn night. After manoeuvring for awhile he recorded what he saw under that cloud: "6500-ton passenger freighter belching thick black smoke," travelling at 10.5 knots, escorted by a two-stack destroyer. Graf saw everything bigger than it really was. *Grandmere* was only a single-stack minesweeper, and *Caribou*, at 2200 tons, only one-third the size he gave her. Whether 2000 tons or 6000, she was worth a torpedo. Graf took another hour, stalking the prey across Cabot Strait, to work into his preferred position for an attack, waiting on the victim's starboard bow. At 2:20 a.m. Atlantic Standard Time, 2:50 a. m. in Newfoundland, forty miles southwest of Port aux Basques, from a range of 700 metres U-69 fired a single torpedo at *Caribou*'s starboard side.



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Somebody calculated it should take about thirty-five seconds for the torpedo to run to the target. Everyone in the conning tower watched his timepiece. *Caribou* and *Grandmere* came on pleasantly, across a calm sea; twenty-five seconds, thirty. The Germans held their breath. In all of Newfoundland's recorded history, this was the longest minute. Thirty-five seconds, thirty-seven, thirty-nine. The engineer officer started to swear: "Himmel, another one of those dud — " when the torpedo hit its target and exploded.

The *Caribou* was struck midships on the right side, well below the waterline. The explosion and the sea crashing in killed the men in the engine room. In the rest of the ship people survived the blast only to die in the water. The ferry sank within five minutes. With the engine room flooded there were no lights. People who used to think Hell would be lit by dancing flames now realized it would be dark. In that blackness people woke up, tried to find things, tried to find each other, tried to reach the top deck and find safety. There was none, the world was sinking.

The starboard-side lifeboats were destroyed by the explosion. Three portside boats were intact, but one could not be lowered because of the great tilt to the right which *Caribou* immediately took on. Of the two which were launched, one soon capsized from being badly overloaded with people, drowning most occupants. There were several big rafts secured on the upper deck. In the last frantic minutes crew members and some passengers worked frantically to cut their bindings and let them float. Most of the people who came through alive were picked up from the rafts, if they were hardy enough to withstand the numbing cold of immersion and repeated loss of body-heat as waves slopped over those low platforms and the wind, blowing them dry, blew lives away.

### GRANDMERE

In more normal times, HMCS *Grandmere* was just a modest minesweeper. A recent, rushed conversion to anti-submarine patrol vessel, necessitated by the crisis of enemy U-boats in inshore waters, had seen her fitted out with depth-charge throwers, and with sound-detection gear ("asdic," now called "sonar"). On the night of 13-14 October she was escorting from astern, in accordance with prescribed British naval doctrine for a single escort. In the lurid light that leaped from the explosion at *Caribou*'s right side, *Grandmere* caught her first glimpse of the submarine and made a course to ram it. U-69 quickly dived, spiralling down, while *Grandmere*, having noted the last observed track the submarine made in the water, directed her depth-charge attack along that line.

Tense listeners in the U-boat heard one explosion close overhead, harmless, then a dozen more, further away. They heard the eerie moaning, magnified underwater, of sea and air rushing through *Caribou*'s wrecked passageways as the ferry descended from the surface, and a series of hollow thuds as she settled on the stony bottom. They also heard the ticking of *Grandmere*'s asdic seeking them out.

For the first time in Canadian waters a new gadget which German scientists had developed was released, the anti-ascic bubble decoy.

*Grandmere* was not misled by this decoy — she detected neither it nor the submarine itself. As usual, temperature and salinity layers in relatively shallow waters rendered the surface sailors blind and deaf. Graf now directed his boat, with quiet engines, over into the area where the ferry had gone down. He knew there would be survivors in the water overhead, and that the naval ship would not like to come depth-charging in their midst, risking injury and death to people in the water from concussion. The minesweeper faced a dilemma: whether to hunt the sub or quickly seek out survivors and rescue them from the frigid sea (about seven Celsius that night).<sup>14</sup> E.J.Pratt, the eminent Newfoundland-Canadian poet, gave this problem classic expression in his epic poem on convoy operations, "Behind the log." He refers to escorts and their

... triple task —

To screen the convoy, counter-attack, and then,  
The humane third of rescuing the sailors.

*Grandmere* actually had no hard choice to reach, for naval instructions settled the matter. Top priority was to destroy the enemy. For two hours the minesweeper conducted an ever-widening search, and ignored the cruel plight of people wet, cold and expiring on the dark water. Pratt:

...high strategy

Demanded of the brain an execution

Protested by the tactics of the heart.<sup>15</sup>

As the sky began to lighten October 14th the minesweeper finally bent to the call of pity. With scramble nets draped along both sides, she ran gently along the windrow of debris from the vanished ferry, now stretched over several miles of ocean. RCAF crash boat B-109 from North Sydney, patrolling overhead, reported:

Minesweeper picking up survivors. Signalled asking for air protection. Numerous rafts, lifeboats and wreckage scattered over sea. Commenced search for survivors, dropping flame floats to mark positions. One lifeboat approx. 6 miles distance was sighted packed with 20 to 30 survivors.... Survivors in lifeboat cheered and waved each time aircraft flew over.<sup>16</sup>

*Grandmere* picked up all the survivors, 103 persons in all, then returned to hunting the submarine. Two of those recovered from the water were so far gone with hypothermia they could not be revived, and soon died. Relieved on the scene by several naval vessels, including minesweeper HMCS *Drummondville*, and a flotilla of small civilian boats out from Port aux Basques, *Grandmere* brought her tired cargo to North Sydney, where they walked or were carried ashore just before supertime.

## LOSSES

Of a total complement of 238 souls who sailed on *Caribou's* last crossing, 137 were killed.<sup>17</sup> The grim figure makes this disaster the second-worst in Newfoundland's 20th century tally of losses at sea, surpassed only by the 173 who went down with the sealing vessel *Southern Cross* in 1914.<sup>18</sup> It is to the credit of *Caribou's* crew members that despite their superior knowledge of emergency equipment and procedures, the rate of fatalities among them — two-thirds — was as bad as the rate among ordinary civilian passengers whom it was their duty to stay with and assist.

Category	Total	Died	
	on board	number	percentage
crew members	46	31	67%
civilian passengers	74	49	66%
military passengers	118	57	48%

Among the dead there were eight Americans, sixty-eight Canadians, and sixty-one Newfoundlanders, evenly split between passengers and members of the crew. The military fatalities comprised twenty navy (mostly Newfoundlanders who had joined the British navy); eighteen RCAF including both Newfoundlanders and Canadians; eleven members of the Canadian army whose units were stationed at Botwood, Gander, St. John's, Bell Island and a dozen other spots across the island; and eight members of United States forces returning from leave to Stephenville, Argentia or Fort Pepperrell (St. John's). While military passengers made up half the people on board *Caribou*, they were only forty-one percent of casualties, due probably to their being in good physical condition and, compared with the children and older folk who perished that night, better able to withstand the shock of immersion and prolonged exposure to cold.

After the sinking U-69 stayed quiet and submerged until late afternoon, then rose again to periscope depth. She saw some small craft still patrolling among the wreckage, and frequent aircraft overhead. The submarine proceeded towards the ocean, with one or two torpedoes still on board for which no good use had yet been found. Several days later she was still in position to annoy Newfoundland shipping. On 20 October, just south of Ferryland, U-69 attacked the ore carrier *Rose Castle*, returning empty to Bell Island in a Sydney-Wabana convoy. This time the torpedo did not explode. The lucky target carried on into Conception Bay, where two weeks later, she was sunk by U-518.<sup>19</sup> U-69 shaped course for home base in France, went to sea again at the beginning of February, and was destroyed in the opening stages of the battle around slow westbound convoy ONS 165.<sup>20</sup>

## MEMORIES OF DISASTER

The sinking of the *Caribou* is well remembered in Newfoundland. A casual survey of 150 undergraduates at Memorial University in academic year 1995-6 revealed that all but two or three dozen knew a ferry had been torpedoed in wartime. More telling, perhaps, few could say when they first learned about it. It seems this knowledge is usually absorbed during childhood in a normal Newfoundland socialization, something like race memory.

The earliest reactions to *Caribou's* loss, as is to be expected in wartime, were highly politicized. First came the unworthy hope that nobody would notice the ferry had failed to arrive, that this latest episode in Canada's failure to defend inshore waters might escape public notice. Censorship kept news of the early Wednesday morning tragedy out of Thursday and Friday papers. When further concealment was not possible, the St. John's *Daily News* of Saturday October 17th spread lists of casualties and survivors, and human interest disaster stories, across the front page. An Ottawa *Journal* headline was typical of editorial reaction: "Caribou sinking proves hideousness of Nazi warfare."<sup>21</sup>

A St. John's paper, recording a thoughtful epitaph for the familiar ferry, followed through to the same conclusion.

A gallant ship: a happy and homelike ship's company. Every Newfoundlander travelling abroad felt himself at once at home as soon as he crossed the gangplank of SS CARIBOU at North Sydney. ... It was such a useless crime from the point of view of warfare. It will have no effect upon the course of the war except to steel our resolve that this Nazi blot on humanity must be eliminated from our world ...<sup>22</sup>

Angus L. MacDonald, Canadian naval minister, said "Those for whom our hearts bleed most are the women and children.... If there were any Canadians who did not realize that we were up against a ruthless and remorseless enemy, there can be no such Canadians now."<sup>23</sup> Some survivors had the same slant on things. Marjorie Watkins of Calgary told her story from a hospital bed in Sydney. This was not how she had expected to spend her honeymoon. Two weeks earlier, she had married RCAF Pilot Officer John Barrett of Curling, newly qualified at one of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan fields in Ontario. With new wings, he was bringing the new Mrs. Barrett home to Newfoundland to meet the family. She survived the sinking, he did not. The bride took a very patriotic view of losing her husband. "If what happened would shake many Canadians out of their complacency, then it was not in vain."<sup>24</sup>

Other survivors had more horrific memories. Thomas Pearcey, a kitchen worker on the ferry, remembered the panic and fear.

I was on that raft 4 hours and a half. There was 6 of us.... You could not see anything, October, 4 o'clock in the morning. But you could hear people screeching. All over. And then the cattle drowning. Three cars of cattle were going that night, number one hold. There were 3 hatches off to give them fresh air.... We didn't talk much. You had to watch yourself, she didn't tip over or you didn't get washed off.<sup>25</sup>

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William Strickland lost all three members of his family who were travelling with him, back home to Rose Blanche. He escaped twice from the stricken ship, the first time into a lifeboat already launched.

Taking my child Hobby, I tossed her down aboard of the boat where my wife and baby were. As I began to get down myself, the lifeboat capsized and I heard my wife cry out, "Hobby is gone" ....

With a surviving baby, the couple managed to climb back on board the sinking ferry.

My wife screamed for her baby then grasped my hand and said, "Bill, we will go together." By then, the water was to our knees and was still rising. A sea broke over us and we were separated from one another. From that moment, I never saw my wife again.<sup>26</sup>

Jack Hatcher felt lucky not to be wearing a lifebelt:

The boat I was on, she'd accommodate 45. There was 80 on it.... And boy, over she goes. I went down under water. But if I had had a lifebelt I wouldn't've went under water. I'd've been caught in under her. After I broke water, I made a few strokes.... got a hold onto her keel. And in the water 3 or 4 others, and they had hold of my legs, tugging at my legs.... Only 6 of us saved out of 80. I could hear them in under the boat...they had to stay there...thumping, thumping....<sup>27</sup>

After the sinking, the Newfoundland Government motor vessel *Burgeo* took over the regular run to the mainland, switching to daytime rather than night crossings. Regardless of previous doctrine, the escort shifted its position from astern of the ferry to ahead. She steered a zig-zag course, to sweep with asdic those dangerous areas both to right and left of the ferry's intended path. During the remaining several years of war, however, the enemy never again approached.

\* \* \*

During the Second World War Newfoundland experienced a heightened degree of intrusion by foreign influences. They have been personified in this account by the large number of non-Newfoundlanders utilizing the colony's transportation system, Newfoundlanders enlisted in the armed forces of other states, and hostile visits paid to the out-of-the-way island by enemy warships. The *Caribou*/U-69 encounter reminds us again that for everyone involved — victims, victimizers, soon to be hunted in their turn, and those watching anxiously from afar — war is hell. Suffering makes a stronger bond than official enmity divides. As Pratt said: "Sailors above the sea, sailors below, drew equally upon a fund of courage."<sup>28</sup>

In the *Caribou* tragedy, civilians had to show that they too had credit in that fund. All over Asia and Europe, attacks upon civilian populations were commonplace by 1942. But this was the only such strike in North America.

U-69's torpedoing of *Caribou* was an easy attack on a legitimate target, and was the submarine's last success. Four months later it too was sunk, with the entire crew. Not for nothing did German sailors call their submarines "iron coffins." As Admiral Erich Raeder said in 1939, when told to prepare for war, the German navy "could do little more than to show the world 'how to die gallantly'."<sup>29</sup> U-69's crew died because it was their duty to do so, they died from choice.

For the 137 victims on *Caribou*, however, things were different. During the period of hostilities, the ferry made about 2000 voyages between Port aux Basques and Cape Breton. All these trips, except one, were completed in perfect safety. The folk who sailed on *Caribou*'s last crossing had the tremendously bad luck to be on the only trip targeted by the enemy. They met disaster by pure chance: death by misadventure.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>RCN and RCAF terminology based upon the names of the terminal harbours, Sydney and Port aux Basques. W.A.B. Douglas, *The creation of a national air force: the official history of the Royal Canadian Air Force, II* (Toronto: Minister of Supply & Services Canada, 1986), 496-497.

<sup>2</sup>Michael Hadley, *U-boats against Canada: German Submarines in Canadian Waters* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's, 1985), chapters 3,4; 82-143.

<sup>3</sup>Douglas, 503.

<sup>4</sup>Gilbert Tucker, *The naval service of Canada, II* (Ottawa: King's printer, 1952), 538-540.

<sup>5</sup>Cajus Bekker, *The German navy 1939-1945* (Toronto: Hamlyn, 1974), 141.

<sup>6</sup>Hadley, 5. More precisely, according to one of U-69's commanding officers, "La vache qui rit," when a dockyard artist copied a cartoonish figure from a French cheese-crate. Jost Metzler, *The laughing cow* (London: Kimber, 1955), 97.

<sup>7</sup>Written on U-541, 1944. See Hadley, 307-311.

<sup>8</sup>Lothar-Günther Buchheim, *U-boat war* (New York: Knopf, 1978), section VII-C, Preparations. Metzler, 11.

<sup>9</sup>The map is compiled from data in Jürgen Rohwer, *Axis submarine successes 1939-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1983, first published 1968), 43-129.

<sup>10</sup>Hadley, 131.

<sup>11</sup>Harry Bruce, *Lifeline: the story of the Atlantic ferries and coastal boats* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977), 47.

<sup>12</sup>H. Thornhill, *It happened in October* [s.l.: H. Thornhill, 1945], 12-14. St. John's *Evening Telegram*, 9 September 1985, 6.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Cantley, MP Pictou, cited in M. MacLeod, "Subsidized steamers to a foreign country," *Acadiensis* (Spring 1985), 84.

<sup>14</sup>Douglas How, *Night of the CARIBOU* (Hantsport, Nova Scotia: Lancelot Press, 1988), 92-93.

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<sup>15</sup>“Behind the log,” lines 640-652. Sandra Djwa and R.G.Moyles, editors, *E.J.Pratt: Complete poems Part 2* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 169-170.

<sup>16</sup>Hadley, 140-143. How, 99-101.

<sup>17</sup>Newfoundland Museum, *The sinking of the SS CARIBOU*, 2-4. Hadley, 142. Occasionally one reads of 136 being lost, for example, in W.A.B.Douglas, *Creation of a national air force*, 506. This error is based upon the known tally of 101 survivors and the ship’s passenger list which showed a total of 237 persons on board. One passenger (Bob Newman of Petites near Rose Blanche, Newfoundland, a frequent Cabot Strait crosser who carefully timed the ferry’s operations), jumped on board as *Caribou* was casting off, after the list had been finalized and sent ashore. He survived. How, 45, 107-109.

<sup>18</sup>A total of 193 lost their lives when United States naval vessels *Truxton* and *Pollux* (the original name of the *Southern Cross* was also *Pollux*) went ashore at the tip of the Burin Peninsula in 1942. The death toll was very equally divided between the two ships. Loss of life in other great disasters was: sealers from the *Newfoundland* lost on the ice in 1914, 78 dead; *Florizel* 1918, 94 dead; *Ocean Ranger* 1982, 84 dead.

<sup>19</sup>Steve Neary, *The enemy on our doorstep: the German Attacks at Bell Island, Newfoundland, 1942*. (St. John’s: Jespersen, 1994), 54-56.

<sup>20</sup>David Syrett, “‘Situation extremely dangerous’: three Atlantic convoys in February 1943,” in Timothy J.Runyan and Jan M.Copes editors, *To die gallantly: the battle of the Atlantic* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 170.

<sup>21</sup>Quoted in Hadley, 142.

<sup>22</sup>Editorial in *The Royalist*, XX, No. 11 (November 1942).

<sup>23</sup>Hadley, 142.

<sup>24</sup>How, 117.

<sup>25</sup>“The sinking of the ferry CARIBOU,” *Cape Breton’s Magazine*, Number 10 [1975], 23-24.

<sup>26</sup>Thornhill, *It happened in October*, 85-86.

<sup>27</sup>“The sinking of the ferry CARIBOU,” 25.

<sup>28</sup>“Behind the log,” lines 701-702. *Complete poems, Part 2*, 171.

<sup>29</sup>Runyan and Copes, xiii.

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