



# Sabretache

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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July 2012

## HMS Victory

In July 1759, Mr Edward Allen, Master Shipwright of Chatham Dockyard received a letter from the Principal Officers and Commissioners of the Admiralty directing him: *"To make preparation and to prepare costing for a First-Rate Ship of 100 guns, to be built and fitted for sea at Chatham"*. Upon receipt of this warrant, work began on the ship that was to become *HMS VICTORY*.

By custom, seven names were reserved for First Rates. The name *"Victory"* was the only name not already in use so it was chosen for the new ship in 1760. There were some doubts in the minds of the Admiralty Board before the name was actually chosen, as the previous *Victory* had been lost with all hands a few years before. But a new *Victory* did not seem to upset the people of the country and, more importantly, the sailors who would eventually sail her and take her into battle. The keel was laid down in the old single dock at Chatham



Dockyard on 23 July 1759. Timber for constructing a first rate ship had been placed in store to season some 14 years before. It is very probable that the long seasoning time greatly contributed to the ship's eventual longevity.

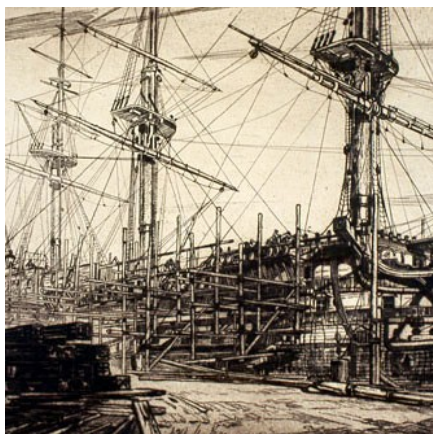
At first, some 250 men were employed in her construction, but with the changing fortunes of war the workforce was reduced. When the Seven Years War ended in 1763 further employees were made redundant as work to complete the ship became less urgent.

She was floated out of the dock on Sunday 7th May, a blustery day. Strangely there are no newspaper reports of her launch. She was towed away to be ballasted, as she had a significant list to starboard, it took thirty-four tons of shingle ballast to correct it. *Victory* was then completed for the 'ordinary' (into reserve) and was laid up for the next thirteen years.

At the beginning of March 1771 when Nelson joined his first ship *Raisonable* a 64 gun, at twelve years old, he would have seen *Victory* at her moorings. He may even have seen a lot of activity around her as she was rushed into dry dock because she was in danger of sinking due to part of her bottom boards working loose. She was repaired and returned to her moorings where she stayed for a further five years.

In December 1776 the Board of Admiralty ordered *Victory* to be completed and commissioned for sea service. By February 1778 the ship's fitting out was finished. She was to be Admiral Keppel's flagship. *Victory's* first captain was Sir John Lindsay. On the 9th March 1778 he arrived in Chatham to take command of her. On Monday, 13th April, she slipped, and made sail for the first time, mooring later in the day above Sheerness, where she stayed for nearly a month, to complete her ship's crew.

*Victory* fired her first Royal Salute of twenty one guns on Saturday, 25th April when George III passed in his yacht on route to Chatham. On Friday 8th May, 1778, *Victory* finally slipped her moorings and "tasted" the sea for the first time, thirteen years and one day from the hour of her launch. The next day John Smith fell overboard at 0330 and was drowned, the first of many casualties.



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- Dispatches from the front
- Notice of next meeting
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### CMHS Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday,  
July 16th.  
2013**

**7:00 pm**

At the  
Petty Officers' Mess  
HCMS Tecumseh

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THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE  
CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The  
CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is a non-profit registered society  
which fosters the study of the  
military and the police, and the heritage of  
Canada, the British Empire, and the world  
as well as the preservation of military  
artifacts and records.

The CMHS meets once every calendar month  
at:

Petty Officers' Mess  
HMCS Tecumseh  
1820 - 24th Street SW  
Calgary AB T2T 0G6

All are welcome to attend

## Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on

**Tuesday, July 16th, 2013**

**19:00 (7:00 pm)**

At the Petty Officers' Mess, HMCS Tecumseh.

Members are reminded that an offering of foodstuffs for the Legion Food Bank is considered your unofficial entrance fee to our regular scheduled meetings.

The unofficial agenda of this meeting will be:

- Introduction of guests, Minutes of last meeting
- Correspondence, Membership report
- Treasurer's report, Old business / New business
- Break, Show & Tell

The President, David S would like to invite everyone to remain after the meeting for an informal time of fellowship.

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**Copper Sheathing.** HMS Victory is 69m (226ft) long from bowsprit to taffrail and 62m (205ft) high from waterline to main mast. She could spread up to 37 sails and has 42km (26 miles) of rigging cordage. Displacement 3,500 tons. She was sheathed with nearly 4,000 sheets of copper.

Complete cladding with copper of the underwater hull of a ship had been first used on HMS Alarm in 1761 to prevent attack of the wooden hull by the Teredo worm in tropical waters. The copper was also found to reduce biofouling of the hull very significantly which gave ships a great advantage of speed when compared with those dragging round a vast growth of marine weed. The cladding kept ships in commission at times when others had to be dry-docked or careened on a shore for hull scraping. This significantly enlarged the effective strength of the Navy

The copper sheets were a nominal 4ft (1220mm) long by 14" (356mm) wide and overlapped at the joints, about 3,500 being needed. Some were smaller and shaped to infill contour changes. They were fixed with nails also made of copper to avoid bimetallic corrosion. At the bows the copper was usually of a thickness equivalent to 32oz weight of copper per square foot. Most of the sides of the hull were clad with 28oz copper but 22 oz sufficed for the stern. This wore sufficiently to need replacement every 20 years or so. The manufacturers marks of a large number of rolling mills can be seen on sheets that have been removed during the restoration. Mostly these date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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**The Threat of Destruction** HMS Victory became the flagship for the Port Admiral in Portsmouth but was listed for disposal in 1831. Fortunately she was preserved by public acclaim and in 1889 acquired her present title of flagship for the Commander-in-Chief. Routine maintenance continued but in 1903 she was accidentally rammed, necessitating extensive repairs to be completed before the celebrations of the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 1905. The ships copper sheathing would be recycled into souvenirs.

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**Commerce to the Rescue** In 1905 the B.F.S.S. (British & Foreign Sailor's Society) was instrumental in the program of events for the Nelson Centennial. A fund was set up known as 'The Nelson Centenary Memorial Fund' and the King, who took a great interest in the Society, allowed his initials, E.R. VII, to be stamped on the souvenirs. The subscribers to the fund were able to acquire medals and badges, made from the copper sheathing. The larger medals/badges were given for 5 shillings and upwards, the small Victory charm (16.5mm) to everyone sending 1 shilling (=5p) and upwards. Provision was also made for a Victory Shield (for £5. 5s., five guineas, now £5.25) for schools to award annually to a boy or girl for success. Copper was also used to make Nelson busts which were available for donations of £50. The remaining copper from H.M.S. FOUROYANT was also acquired and used to provide HMS Victory souvenirs for the boys and girls of the Empire.

## Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of meeting held on June 18th. 2013

Meeting called to order by President David S. at 7:10 PM.

A total of 19 members, and 2 guests were in attendance

**Minutes** of last meeting were approved by Bab M and Mike C.

**Guests introduced.** Noreen, guest of Mike C. hails from Holland and Ireland. Also David L., a former member

**Treasures Report.** Brian H. Our esteemed treasurer gives his report. Also gives year end report which he has submitted to the Provincial Gov't. This is the annual filing for the non profit society; List of expense paid and donation that was made to the Legion Fund.

Treasures report moved as read by Mike C. seconded by Floyd S. Carried infamously

**Correspondence.** -email from member on the web site. Discussion follows.

### Old Business:

David S.—discusses ideas for the club to sponsor something at the museum.

David G.—discusses newsletter and political correctness.

New Business: No new business brought up.

### Break.

**Ticket raffle** by Member Neil Many happy winners.

### Show and Tell

David G.— display of his Uncle Fred's medals

Brian H. Research on WW1 casualties in Canada. James Quin —Crimean War Vet.

Marjorie N. —Picture of Mother who was a WW1 Nursing Sister. Photo of Display

Floyd S.—Training school emblems from Flight School Nanton

Barry E. 49th Battalion Hat badge

Allan Mc. QSA medals for Seaforth Highlanders. Discussion of different medals.

David L.-WW2 Allied Air force Chaplains Badges, Rare Jewish Badge, Communion kit post war Canada and UK.

Bob McP.-WW2 Nazi Lapel Pins , Military Scrip, Libyan and US.

Mike C. -RCAF 1967 flags, VE Day newspaper, Boer War Medical Staff badge. Boer War Vets Association pin. Tribute medal for lawyers, clerks in UK.

Gary M—military art painting. Of veteran who was a neighbour. Shows aircraft and aircraft carrier

.Al D. —story on Seafire aircraft and other aircraft at museum.

James B. Discusses Korean exhibit at museum. July 27 , 60th anniversary of Korean Ceasefire.

Call for adjournment. Floyd S. and seconded by Barry E.

**Military Collectors' Club of Canada**  
Annual Show and Convention, to be held at  
the  
Ramada Conference Centre  
11834 Kingsway Ave. Edmonton  
August 17th, 9:30 AM—5:00 PM, August  
18th, 10:00 AM—4:00PM  
Over 100 display tables.



Piece of the original copper sheathing from HMS Victory



Badge commemorating the centenary of Nelson's death Centenary Memento of the Death of Admiral Nelson. Dated October 21st, 1905. Cast from copper in the shape of HMS Victory. Pin back fastener. This memorial pin has the following words cast into the reverse: 'Centenary Memento of the Death of Nelson, 1805 Oct. 21st 1905. Containing Copper From H.M.S. Victory. The Gift of the Lords of the Admiralty to British and Foreign Sailors Society. E.R.VII' (i.e. Edward VII).

Token Lord Nelson's Death Centenary 1905. Obverse shows Lord Nelson with writing underneath 'Death of Nelson Oct.21, 1805 centenary Memento Oct. 21, 1905'. Edging reads 'Presented by British & Foreign Sailors Society - Containing Victory copper From Lords of the Admiralty'. Reverse shows a ship with writing underneath 'Victory Trafalgar Oct. 21, 1805'. Wording around edge reads 'England Expects That Everyman Will Do His Duty - Thank God I have Done My Duty'. Diameter 30mm (1 1/8"). Drilled for use as a pendant.



1905 Nelson / Victory commemorative medalet within a four-pointed decorative star. Unlike most of the basic medalets, the view is of HMS Victory port side but the reverse text is the more common 'From BFSS Nelson Centenary containing Victory copper E.R.VII'.

HMS Victory Medal 1924 Reverse floral decoration surrounding the text 'Medal struck from copper taken from HMS Victory 1924'. Obverse shows HMS Victory almost bow on leading a convoy with stunsails set and surrounded by the text 'Save the Victory Fund'. The design is signed McM (W. McMillan). Diameter 32mm.

