



# Sabretache

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## THE STRANGE SAGA OF A SHIP. HMCS TR41

-Built in Canada by a U.S. owned company in Port Author, Ontario. (now Thunder Bay)

-Ordered and paid for by the Royal Navy, to be loaned and used by the Canadian Navy.

-Delivered to the Canadian Navy in 1919, but never used or named.

-Given back to the Royal navy, who then sell it to a French Company in July 1920. The company “Pêcheries et Arme-

ments La Rochelle-Océan” (PARO) based in La Rochelle, (*La Rochelle is a city in southwestern France and a seaport on the Bay of Biscay*) converts the TR41 into a trawler and renamed it Marie-Simone.



-From November 1920 to November 1926, the shipowner bought 10 other former patrol boats of the TR class, which he all renamed with a first name comprising Marie: Marie-Anne (ex TR-43), Marie-Gilberte (ex TR-42), Marie-Thérèse (ex TR-53), etc

-In 1932 the company merges with another company and in 1936 it sells its trawlers to another company

-In 1939, when war was declared, the French navy requisitioned a multitude of merchant and fishing vessels. In La Rochelle, on September 14, 1939, this was the case for fourteen motor trawlers and sixteen steam trawlers. Some of these ships, although requisitioned, are kept fishing with their crews to supply the country with fish, others, like the Marie-Simone, now identified as AD

110, are converted back into patrol boats while remaining the property of their owners.

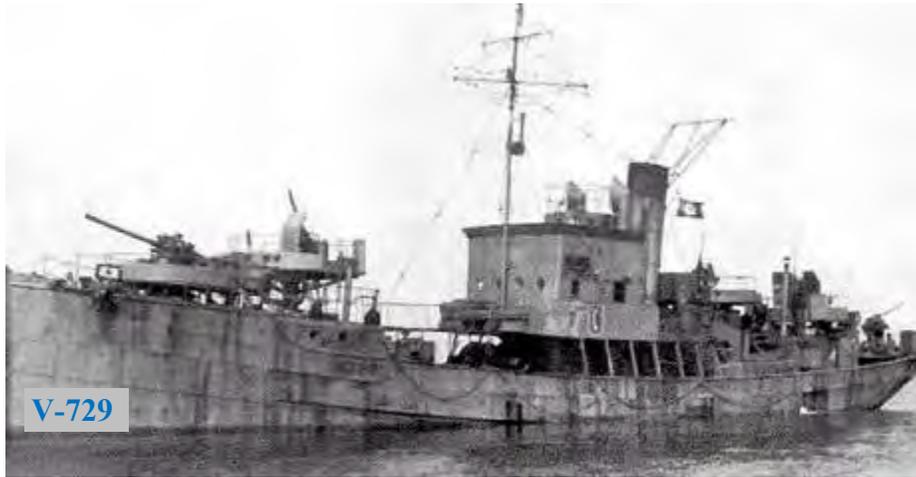
-On June 23rd, 1940, the city of La Rochelle was taken over by the German army, which in turn seized fourteen motor trawlers and twelve steam trawlers. Like the French army in 1939, the German army maintains certain fishing units and transforms others into auxiliary warships, minesweepers and patrol boats.

- This is the case of the Marie-Simone, converted in 1941 into a patroller of the Kriegsmarine, (Nazi Germany Navy) under the registration number HS8, and equipped with an 88 mm gun and anti-aircraft guns

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**Page 5** Message and request from Member Roy Akins

**Page 6** Obituary for former Member David Cathcart



**Kriegsmarine, (Nazi Germany Navy) number HS8, (formally TR41, formally Marie Simone) and now equipped with an 88 mm gun and anti-aircraft guns**

**May 1942 renumbered V-729**

- In May of 1942, the ship was incorporated into the 7th Vorpostenboot flottille (patrol flotilla) assigned to the Atlantic coast of France, under the number **V-729**.

***Vorpostenboot*** (plural *Vorpostenboote*), also referred to as **VP-Boats, flakships or outpost boats**, were German patrol boats which served during both World Wars. They were used around coastal areas and in coastal operations, and were tasked with – among other things – coastal patrol, ship escort, and naval combat.



**Unidentified VP-Boat**

-On July 6th, 1944, **V-729** was involved with several other Kriegsmarine ships in the **Battle of Pierres Noires** which was part of Allied Operation Dredger. Their opposition was 4 **Royal Canadian Navy Destroyers**. (*HMCS Saskatchewan, HMCS Ou'Appelle, HMCA Skeena and HMCS Restigouche*).

-Two of the Kriegsmarine escort boats, **V729** and V728, were seriously damaged requiring work in the Brest repair yards,  
**See Battle of Pierres Noires Page 3**

-On August 23rd, 1944 during **Operation Kinetic and the Battle of Audierne Bay**, **TR41-Marie Simone-AD-110-HS8-V-729** finally meets its end. Destroyed by the Royal Canadian Navy ship **HMCS Iroquois**  
**See Battle of Audierne Bay Page 4 & 5**



**HMCS Iroquois**



The **TR series** were minesweeping naval trawlers built during World War I. They were based on the Royal Navy's Castle class trawlers. Ordered and paid for in Canada by the Royal Navy, they were loaned to the Royal Canadian Navy for seaward defence of the East Coast of Canada.

-In November of 1916 the British Admiralty demanded that Canada expand its East Coast patrol fleet with auxiliary trawlers. The Canadian Government s acquired several fishing trawlers from the United States and converted them into auxiliary minesweeping vessels and ordered the twelve Battle-class trawlers of their own design from Canadian shipyards.

-In February of 1917, the Admiralty initially ordered the construction of 36 naval trawlers from Canadian shipyards as part of a building programme intended to improve the state of seaward defence in Canadian waters. Other orders were to follow.

-The trawlers were constructed at various shipyards in Quebec and in the Great Lakes including the Port Arthur Shipbuilding Co. (Now Thunder Bay)

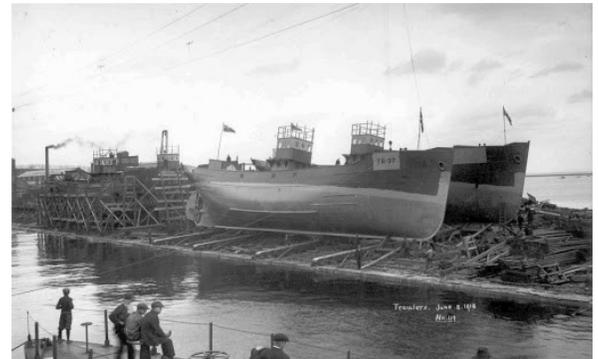
-Twenty-two trawlers were constructed at various facilities and sent to Quebec City to be completed and commissioned before the Saint Lawrence River froze over during the winter at the end of 1917. Once completed and commissioned, the vessels would be then sent on to join the East Coast patrol fleet. However, none of the vessels were completed in time to take part in the 1917 shipping season.

This was due to construction delays as the American war effort, which had begun to pick up its pace, began to recruit Canadian workers. This caused work shortages at the Canadian yards.

-The majority of the trawlers that had arrived at Quebec City were laid up for the winter there, most requiring further work. The ice on the Saint Lawrence River prevented the trawlers from clearing the river until May 1918. Upon arrival, the trawlers were put to use in both minesweeping and patrol roles .

-In December 1917, the British government sought to expand the shipbuilding contracts in Canada. Alongside a large merchant ship construction programme, the Admiralty ordered a second batch of trawlers from Canadian shipyards.

-Designated Lot B, (**TR41 was in this group**) they were intended to be delivered by Fall 1918, but a shortage of labor leads to more delays. The steel required to construct boilers and hulls was delivered as late as August 1918. TR37 to TR44 were all built at the Port Author shipyard but not completed till May Of 1919. They were turned back over to the Royal Navy.



**TR Trawlers being built at Port Arthur Shipbuilding Co. Port Author, Ontario (now Thunder Bay)**

## The Battle of Pierres Noires

**Background:** The port of Brest had been an important German U-boat base since the fall of France, and its capture was one of the objectives of Operation Overlord. With the increasing effectiveness of the Allied anti-submarine campaign however it often became essential for any U-boat departing the port to have surface escorts . U-boats departed Brest starting on July 6th, 1944 under the protection of 4 *Vorpostenboot* escort trawlers. Escort Group 12, with HMCS *Qu'Appelle* as the lead boat, detected the German force on radar and set off in pursuit at 30 knots. The two sides engaged in the vicinity of the Pierres Noires lighthouse.

**The Battle:** Shortly after the allies landed in Normandy, while part of the 7th Vorpostenflottille was based in Brest, the English and Canadian navies organized a blockade of the Channel and Atlantic coasts.

At the beginning of July 1944, the **V-729, ex Marie-Simone**, was engaged in a first fight with the **Canadian navy:**

**Continued Page 4**

## The Battle of Pierres Noires continued.

“During the night of the 5th to the 6th, the submarines U 212 and U 309 set sail. from Brest to La Manche, escorted by 6 units, the patrol boats V-713 ex Leipzig, V-715 ex Alfred I, V-728 ex Vierge de Massabielle, and **V-729 ex Marie Simone** of the 7th Vorpostenflottille as well as by the dredgers M-4013 and M-4045 of the 40 MSF. Around 1:40 a.m. at the exit of the German minefield off the coast of Ouessant, all these units were intercepted by a force made up of 4 Canadian destroyers (**HMCS Saskatchewan, HMCS Qu’Appelle, HMCS Skeena & HMCS Restigouche**) who were engaged in the Allied “Operation Dredger. “

Immediately, the destroyers opened fire and hit the V-715 with the first bursts, seriously injuring the Leutnant zS Thiess, its commander. At the same time, the German flotilla fiercely retaliated against Allied fire and after 30 minutes of fierce fighting, ended up forcing the destroyers to stall while the submarines escaped. . In addition to the V-715 which is on fire from bow to stern, the patrol boats V-728 and **V-729**, were also badly damaged but managed to reach Brest while the V-715 was abandoned around 6 am, eventually sinking in the southern entrance of the Chenal du Fromveur. The survivors including Lieutenant Thiess were rescued by two S-Bootes.

### Operation Kinetic and the Battle of Audierne Bay

Operation *Kinetic* had been set up by the Royal Navy Command Headquarters; the objective of which was to eliminate the German navy all along the French Atlantic ports. Of three Forces of Kinetic - **Force 27** under the command of **William Davis**, consisting of the light cruiser **HMS Mauritius** and the destroyers **HMS Ursa** and **HMCS Iroquois**, departed Plymouth on 13 August to carry out a new patrol along the central section of the Biscay coast.



HMS Mauritius

On the night of 22/23 August, the cruiser **HMS Mauritius** and the destroyers **HMCS Iroquois** and **HMS Ursa** were patrolling Audierne Bay between Brest and Lorient and radar soon picked up a large contact heading towards them

**The Germans were trying to flee the Port of Audierne, They had seven armed trawlers which were divided into two convoys. The V-729 was in the first convoy.**

Davis ordered **HMCS Iroquois**, the ship closest to the contact, commanded by **Commander James Calcutt Hibbard** to use the Type 293 radar and relay the information to the rest of the force. Hibbard placed so much confidence in the radar that he decided to direct the opening moves from the radar centre rather than the bridge. He then gave the order to illuminate with star shells. As a result, *Force 27* was able to close undetected and launched a surprise attack on the known convoy which were three ships (This was the first convoy)

Allied radars detected this convoy at around 1:20 a.m., and the destroyers began to gun the German ships in front of Audierne at 2:10 a.m. In a few minutes, the badly damaged **V-729** managed to run aground along the Raoulic dike where it was destroyed. Mean while the V-702 (ex-Memel) was set on fire on the shoal of La Gamelle and the V-730 (ex -Michel-François) was sunk.

Less than two hours after this first fight, it is the second convoy of German patrol boats which will have to face Force 27. It will also be destroyed.



Radar plotters Able Seamen William Ewasiuk and Harry Henderson of HMCS *Iroquois*, 21 August 1944



6-inch guns of HMS *Mauritius* firing during the action in Audierne Bay 23 August 1944



The V-729, ex Marie-Simone, aground next to the Raoulie jetty, the rear facing the shore.



The remains today

After the liberation, the owner of the TR41-Marie-Simone-V729 refused to take back possession of his trawler and requested compensation from the French navy, which had requisitioned it in September 1939. Having become the property of the State, the Marie-Simone wreck was auctioned in vain in December 1947, then in January 1948. It was finally sold in December 1948 to a scrap dealer who cut up parts of it and left the rest in place. Overtime, what remains continues to degrade due to corrosion, swells and storms.

**Subject: May I ask for your assistance please?**

**Date: 2020-12-07 20:51**

**From: "Roy & Kerri Akins" <akins@telus.net>**

**To: "Dave Love" <dlove@davncibb.net>, "Brother Floyd" <f.e.stinson@shaw.ca>**

Greetings Dave & Floyd,

I'm wondering if one of you could do me a favor.

A friend of mine, Steve Nichol, is the author of *Ordinary Heroes*, the history of the 21<sup>st</sup> Battalion (see attachment).

He's currently nearing completion of *The History of the 5<sup>th</sup> Western Cavalry*.

As you know the 5<sup>th</sup> was perpetuated by the North Saskatchewan Regiment.

Years ago he contacted both the CO and the Chaplain but did not receive a response.

I'm wondering if you could send a note out to the members asking if anyone has a contact in the Regiment?

Perhaps a little networking could get the door open for him.

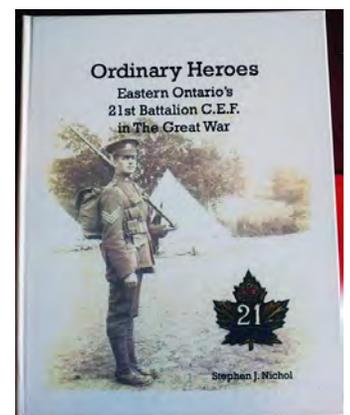
He's not looking for any regimental funding.

He was only hoping for some moral support in terms of a Forward by the CO and perhaps some help with distribution / promotion if possible.

Thanks kindly,

Roy

If anyone can help Steve, he may be reached at [snichol@storm.ca](mailto:snichol@storm.ca)



## OBITUARY NOTICE



**CATHCART, David Herbert George**  
**November 1, 1929 – December 2, 2020**

David Herbert George Cathcart C.D. passed away on December 2, 2020 at the age of 91 years. Born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan on November 1, 1929. David is survived by son Kevin (Marife) Cathcart; daughters Janice (Brian) Erickson Cathcart, Wendy (Ben) Cathcart and Shelley (Kim) Nielsen; grandsons Jarryd (Stacey) Erickson and Cody (Megan) Erickson; great-grandchildren Madilynn, Jax and Colt; sisters Irene Shaw and Pat (Bernie) McNicholl; former spouse Geraldine Cathcart; and numerous nieces and nephews and comrades in arms. He was predeceased by his parents David and Irene (nee Foster) Cathcart. Dave enlisted in the RCAC in 1947 and served in RCD in 1948. He also served with LDSH (RC) in Korea 1951-52, the F.G.H. 1958-1970, L.S.H. 1970-1972 and the RCMP Airport Det. Calgary Int. Airport 1973-1981. He was also employed with the City of Calgary transit security from 1981-1995. Dave was a member of the LDSH (RC) Regiment Association, the Korea veteran association, the RCD association and was a member to the Royal Canadian Legion #264. After retirement in January 1995, Dave was a volunteer for the Calgary Military Museum Society, poppy volunteer and hospital visiting representative at the Colonel Belcher. A memorial service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family would appreciate donations being made in Dave's memory directly to the Calgary Military Museum Society or Alzheimer Society. Messages of remembrance may be left for the family at [www.southcalgaryfuneralcentre.ca](http://www.southcalgaryfuneralcentre.ca)

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The 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

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