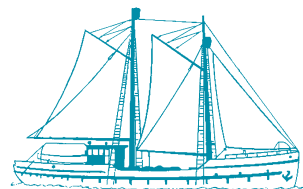


# St. Roch



RCMP Patrol Vessel St. Roch  
Commemorative

Alderney Landing  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

*Ship St. Roch*  
*Commemorative Association*

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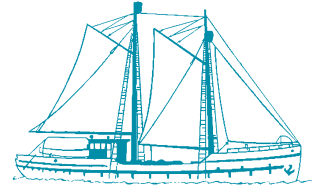


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*St. Roch on Arctic patrol.*



## Introduction



When the RCMP Arctic patrol Vessel St. Roch slipped quietly into wartime Halifax Harbour October 11, 1942 few Canadians were aware of what this small ship had achieved since departing Vancouver in June 1940. The eight-member crew of the 104-foot St. Roch, under the command of Sergeant (later Superintendent) Henry Larsen had completed the first west to east transit of the fabled Northwest Passage (NWP). It was a remarkable achievement: a story of how the St. Roch had spent two winters frozen in ice and how the persevering Larsen and his crew had overcome the worst ice conditions in years to finally reach Canada's WW11 'East Coast Port.' It would not be the first or last of such achievements for the St. Roch launched at North Vancouver in 1928. Over the years the ship's contributions to Arctic exploration and northern development have captured the hearts and minds of seafaring Nova Scotians and Canadians everywhere.

During St. Roch's 1940-42 west to east transit of the NWP, ice conditions forced Larsen to cover much of the same track as Roald Amundsen who was the first explorer to transit the Passage east to west 1903-06. But Larsen and the small ship with the big heart had other plans for the return east to west journey of the NWP. In July 1944, following installation of a more powerful engine and other upgrades at the shipyard in Dartmouth, NS, St. Roch departed for Vancouver. And again the small ship made history. This time the St. Roch transited the NWP using a more northerly and little explored route. She arrived in Vancouver in a record

86 days, becoming the first ship to transit the Passage in both directions. Six years later, the St. Roch added another first when she departed Vancouver for Halifax via the Panama Canal and became the first ship to circumnavigate North America. Shortly after arrival in Halifax and years of service in the unforgiving Arctic the St. Roch was retired. In 1954 she made her final voyage, returning to Vancouver where today the vessel is a permanent exhibit of the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

On October 11, 2007 a special ceremony was held at Alderney Landing, Dartmouth with the dedication and unveiling of the St. Roch Commemorative. The commemorative, overlooking Halifax Harbour, recognizes the significance of St. Roch's historic voyages and the ship's role in northern development and maintaining Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. The ceremony marked the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Roch's 1942 arrival in Halifax and her long association with a number of Nova Scotia communities. The St. Roch Commemorative project was initiated by the Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia with the support of RCMP 'H' Division. Members established the Ship St. Roch Commemorative Association to carry out the planning, funding and installation of the commemorative.

This publication provides an overview of the unique place of the St. Roch and her captain, Henry Larsen in Canada's marine heritage and describes how members of the Ship St. Roch Commemorative Association made the St. Roch Commemorative a reality. ●

***Len Canfield***

## 'RCMP St. Roch'

The schooner-rigged St. Roch was built at Burrard Dry Dock Company, North Vancouver and launched in May 1928. The ship took the name of the eastern Quebec riding of Justice Minister Ernest Lapointe, the Minister responsible for the RCMP at the time. The St. Roch was a sturdy ship: 104 feet in length, 27-foot beam, a rounded hull with thick Douglas fir planking, Australian ironbark outer hull and a steel-plated bow. And the St. Roch was built sturdy for a reason: to operate in one of the world's harshest environments. She could carry a crew of 13 but the usual number was eight. The rounded hull allowed the St. Roch to overcome the crushing pressure of ice but in heavy seas it caused the ship "... to buck and heave like a bronco," a fact not only noted by her experienced captain but also by other crew members with little time at sea. The 'bucking and heaving' may have made the St. Roch an 'uncomfortable ship' at times but this did not prevent her from carrying out numerous missions and assignments in the most trying conditions in 22 years of active service

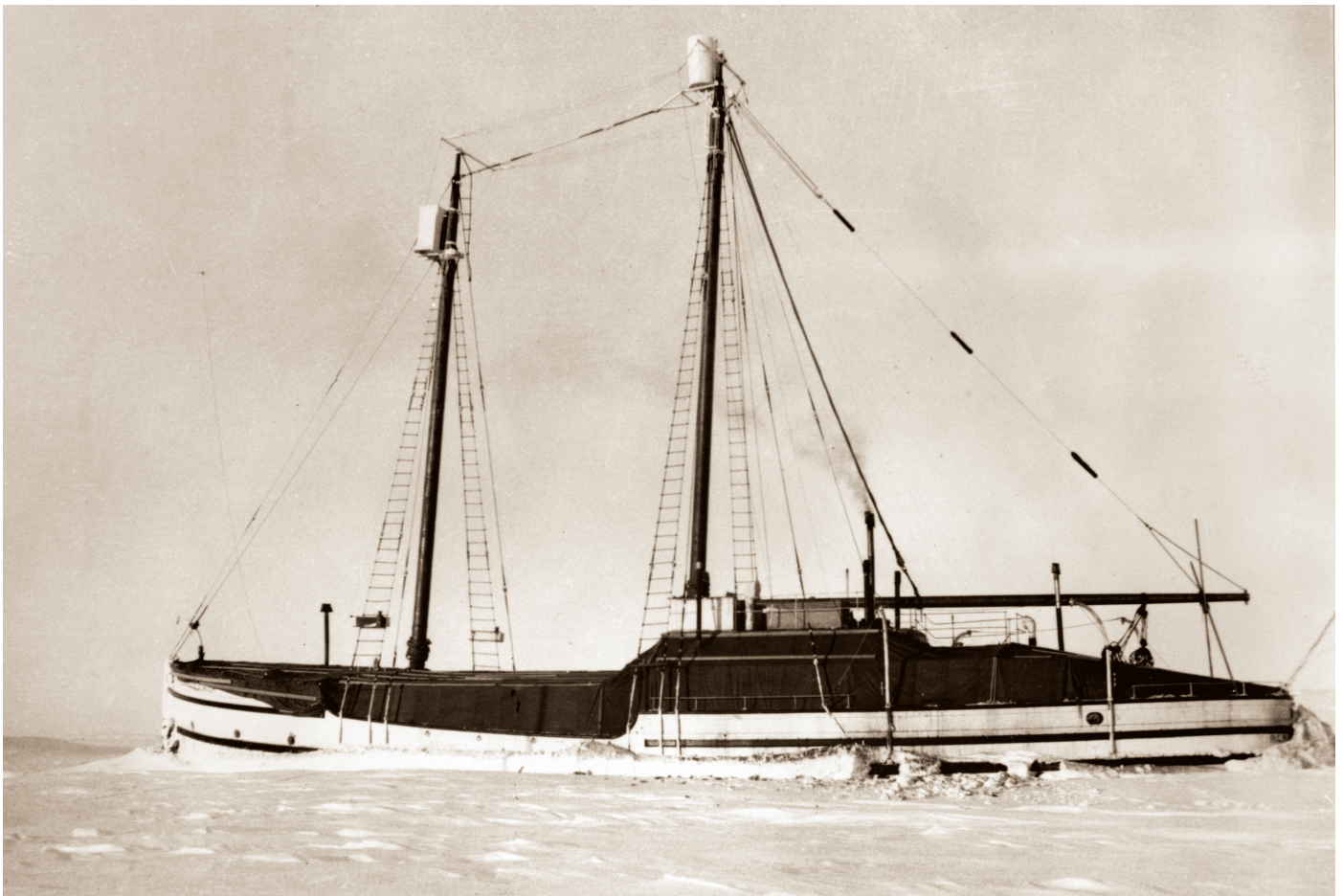
James Delgado's book, *Arctic Workhorse: The RCMP Schooner St. Roch* (2003), aptly describes the ship's role. She was built to patrol the Canadian Arctic, supply RCMP detachments along the

coast and in effect serve as a floating detachment. In addition to policing duties, the St. Roch assisted with other government tasks in the Arctic at a time when Ottawa was expanding its control and development of the far north. The ship visited Herschel Island, Tukoyaktuk, Coppermine, Cambridge Bay, Baillie Island and other communities. She was used to transport the sick and injured to hospital, children to residential schools and officials for court sessions, collect customs duties and taxes, deliver mail and government payments, handle hunting licences and maintain vital statistics. During the winter while frozen in ice the ship served as a base camp for officers to conduct patrols, bringing with them a system of justice and 'goodwill' to the native population. The St. Roch carried dogs to haul the 16-18 foot sleds and officers could cover 30-40 miles a day with journeys of up to 400 miles.

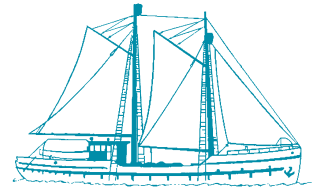
Different publications including reports and articles by Henry Larsen and the documenting of the voyages by his daughter Doreen Larsen Riedel provide a compelling account of the endurance of the St. Roch and the perseverance of her captain and crew in carrying out their missions under difficult circumstances in the most remote areas of Canada.

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*St. Roch frozen in at Cambridge Bay.*







Operating out of Vancouver between 1928-39, the St. Roch spent most of her first winters in the western Arctic. The area presented many challenges for a small ship and as Doreen Larsen Riedel has written: "These voyages were undertaken largely through uncharted waters, without the benefit of sonar, aerial ice reconnaissance, regular radio contact and relying on navigational methods dating back hundreds of years." As well, St. Roch's electrical power was sometimes limited and the ship's configuration did not provide the helmsman's with a clear line of sight, particularly when operating in ice. As a result, Larsen spent hours at a time in the crow's nest looking for 'leads' (openings in the ice floes) and taking bearings.

On her maiden voyage north in 1928 the St. Roch departed Vancouver with 150 tons of cargo, including canned goods and other provisions, 30 tons of coal and barrels of oil and fuel. The RCMP had retained WH Gillen as delivery captain and Larsen served as first mate for the first part of the voyage. At Herschel Island, Capt Gillen turned over command to Larsen and returned to Vancouver. The St. Roch was a welcome sight at RCMP detachments and at other port visits in the western Arctic, and when she returned to Vancouver the following year the vessel had logged more than 10000 nautical miles. In 1930 the St. Roch departed Vancouver for the Arctic and her longest tour of duty, four years' duration, operating out of the Coronation Gulf area before returning to Vancouver in 1934. Between 1935-37 the vessel operated out of Cambridge Bay and endured two hard winters (including little fresh game to supplement the crew's daily diet) before returning to Vancouver. In 1938 the St. Roch, loaded with tons of coal, fuel oil and gasoline, lumber and other provisions and detachment supplies headed north again and returned to Cambridge Bay. In August 1939, at the outbreak of WW11, she was recalled to Vancouver to be assigned other duties.

### ***"Most interesting assignment"***

On several occasions in the 1930s Larsen had proposed the St. Roch proceed beyond the western Arctic and complete the transit of the Northwest Passage to the Atlantic. In early 1940 he got his wish: "...we received our most important and in my mind the most interesting assignment. Our Commissioner, S.T. Wood, informed us that we could proceed to Halifax after our work along the western Arctic was complete...providing we still had sufficient time before freeze-up, which generally occurs the latter part of September." A 'most interesting assignment.' Indeed. Years later it was revealed that initially the St. Roch was to be part of a secret wartime mission involving a Canadian military force that was to proceed through the Northwest Passage and secure the cryolite mines in Denmark-administered Greenland. (At the time German forces occupied Denmark). But the Americans intervened and secured the cryolite (an essential ingredient in aluminum). While the plans changed with this development the transit of the NWP would continue and so serve another important function: to demonstrate Canada's sovereignty in the Canadian Arctic.

On June 21 1940 St. Roch departed Vancouver on her historic voyage. In his report to the Officer Commanding "G" Division (dated November 12 1940), Larsen's list of the crew included F.S. Farrar, first mate; MF Foster, chief engineer; J. Friederick; B.C. Hadley, P.G. Hunt, WJ Parry, A.J. Chartrand and J.M. Monette. By the time the St. Roch reached Point Barrow, Alaska in late July the ice conditions were worse than anticipated. In Larsen's words, "...it was a bad year for ice" along the Alaskan coast and throughout the Arctic. It was late September by the time the St. Roch completed the supply run to the detachments and other tasks. At that stage and with ice conditions worsening Larsen decided to spend the winter at Walker Bay on the west coast of Victoria Island. The St. Roch remained at Walker Bay frozen in until July 31, 1941 when she departed for Tuktoyaktuk (Tuk) to pick up additional supplies and to continue with the west to east transit of the NWP. There was a further delay when the St. Roch was diverted to pick up an Inuit boy who had been shot in the face and transport him for medical treatment. And again, Larsen was facing a short season and continuing bad ice conditions.

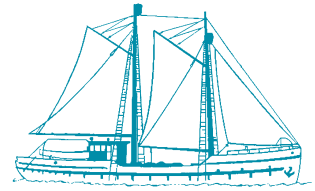
Larsen writes: "... (we continued east) and leaving Cambridge Bay August 20 we arrived at Gjoa Haven on King William Island (Gjoa was name of Amundsen's ship). Buffeted by the ice conditions and violent snowsqualls... by the time we reached Matty Island the ice was solid across and more was driven down McClintock Channel by north-west gale. Here we nearly lost the ship as the area is full of shoals and the force of wind in our faces made it impossible to see. We dropped both anchors and prayed they would hold, which they did although great floes kept crashing down on us all night. By September 3 we had worked up to Pasley Bay (on west coast of Boothia Peninsula) ... and all progress was stopped by ice. We got caught here and drifted back and forth for a week when we got jammed in close to the beach and all the ice in the bay became stationary until August 4 1942." The St. Roch was frozen in for another winter!

Perhaps the hardest time of the voyage for the crew occurred at Pasley Bay when Constable Albert (Frenchy) Chartrand suffered a heart attack and died in February 1942. He was an experienced officer having spent most of his service in the North. He was buried at Pasley Bay and his fellow crewmembers built a 15-foot high cairn to mark the grave. Larsen felt that Chartrand, the only Roman Catholic in the crew should receive the full rites of his church and so with another crewmember and an Inuit guide set off on snowshoes to contact a Roman Catholic priest some 400 hundred miles away. In the spring the missionary, Father Gustav Henri accompanied by several Inuit guides mushed to Pasley Bay to celebrate requiem mass for Chartrand.

With supplies running low and the crew eager for the ice to clear, the St. Roch was finally able to move out of Pasley Bay and head north on August 4 1942. The St. Roch had made only 15 miles when the ship was again locked in ice in the area where Sir John Franklin's 1845-47 expedition was beset and abandoned a century earlier. Then there was a break. As Larsen noted in his report: "On August 24 a small lead opened and we worked our way up to Tasmania Islands where... the loose ice moved back and forth at terrific speed... keeping us all awake as we had to be constantly on the move to avoid damage or getting pushed ashore. (The ship had made only 60 miles in 25 days.) On August 29 a small lead opened and we entered the narrow Bellot Strait (between Somerset Island and Boothia Peninsula) ... with an ice barrier across the middle of it. There was nothing to do except crash into it and attempt to drift through and this we did. The current was very strong, causing large whirlpools, and this caused the ice to gyrate and upends; many times we thought the ship would crack like a nut under pressure." On several occasions the crew prepared to abandon ship. In such situations the crew needed any help they could get. And 'help' was at hand in the presence of two Inuits. Larsen wrote: "We had taken two young Eskimos aboard, a man and wife. One has to admire the quality of these people. At times when things looked really bad they would go up to the forecandle head (bow) and sing at the top of their voices. They told me they were singing so the ship wouldn't get crushed, so I told them to keep on singing. After we got through (the danger) I told them their singing had no doubt helped us a great deal."

*Sergeant Henry Larsen, centre, and members of the crew of St. Roch following arrival in Halifax in October, 1942.*





After finally getting through the 'gyrating ice' in Bellot Strait the St. Roch proceeded up Prince Regent Inlet to Lancaster Sound, entered Navy Board Inlet and arrived at Pond Inlet on Baffin Island September 6. Here, the remaining dogs and spare equipment were unloaded at the RCMP detachment and a constable embarked. On September 10 the St. Roch departed for Halifax. But it was not all smooth sailing on the last leg of the voyage. In the Davis Strait the St. Roch encountered a gale with snow squalls and proceeded with difficulty through small icebergs and growlers. The St. Roch made a brief stop at Corner Brook, Nfld. for temporary engine repairs and on October 11 the ship and her weary crew arrived at Halifax. Escorted by a naval vessel, the St. Roch passed through the anti-submarine net across Halifax Harbour that protected the scores of warships and merchant vessels at anchor and finally secured alongside historic King's Wharf (now Queen's Wharf)... almost 28 months after departing Vancouver!

### ***Nova Scotia Welcome***

The St. Roch had spent more than two years battling ice and the elements and needed a refit. But in wartime Nova Scotia shipyards were working around the clock to meet the pressing needs of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Merchant Navy and other ship operators. In November, Larsen was instructed to proceed to Lunenburg Foundry & Engineering in the historic south shore port of Lunenburg. Here, workmen—with shipbuilding skills honed over many generations—spent several months preparing the St. Roch for her next assignment, a patrol into the eastern Arctic in 1943. It was in Lunenburg that Larsen recruited three fishermen

as crewmembers for the next assignment. It was also the start of a close relationship between Larsen and the people of Lunenburg. Former Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor J.J. (Jim) Kinley, whose family continues to operate the Lunenburg Foundry, recalls the arrival of the St. Roch in Lunenburg in November 1942: "Captain Larsen, his crew and their ship are part of my WW11 memories as a high school student. Later on, following his retirement as Superintendent, Larsen and his family moved to Lunenburg and lived there for several years before returning to Vancouver (where he died). He and his family made many friends in Lunenburg including my parents, the chief of police, the workmen who repaired the St. Roch and other citizens."

It was also during the 1942-1944 period that the Curleigh family would renew an association with Henry Larsen. Brigadier General (Ret'd) Colin Curleigh of Parrsboro, NS, a young schoolboy in Halifax at the time, recalls the excitement in the Curleigh home when the St. Roch arrived Oct 11, 1942. His father Inspector (later Assistant Commissioner) George M. Curleigh had met Larsen while serving as commanding officer of the Western Arctic Sub-Division in Aklavik in the 1930s. It would be the first of several memorable occasions for the younger Curleigh. In 1950 when the St. Roch returned to Halifax, Colin toured the ship and met members of the crew. "This was a great experience... and later when Henry Larsen came to our home for dinner (when his father was serving in the Prairies) I remember sitting there enraptured by his stories and answering questions from my father." The tour of the St. Roch and meeting Larsen would be the start of a lifelong interest in the ship and her captain for the retired Commander of Maritime Air Group.



*St. Roch departing Dartmouth for 1944 east to west voyage through the Northwest Passage.*



### ***"The grand adventure"***

After completing her refit in Lunenburg in mid 1943 the St. Roch returned to Halifax to prepare for her next assignment, a three month patrol and provisioning of detachments along the Labrador coast and eastern Arctic, including Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung.

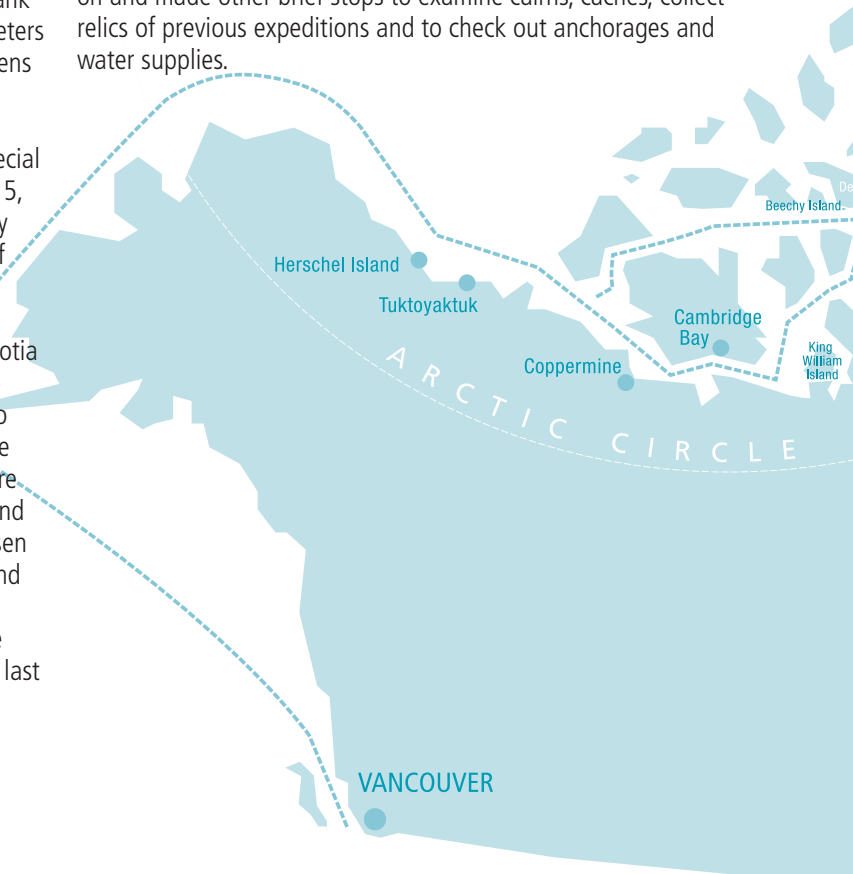
In January 1944 the St. Roch entered the Dartmouth shipyard to be surveyed for a major refit and upgrading. In the next several months the ship's 150 HP diesel would be removed and replaced with a larger 300 HP diesel, a new superstructure installed and the ship repainted. All of this was required, as Larsen wrote, "to get ready for the grand adventure." For the return east to west transit of the Northwest Passage, "...I wanted to try the more northerly route through Lancaster Sound, west to Melville Island, across McClure Strait to Prince of Wales Strait.... This was the real Northwest Passage." And, as Larsen noted, the voyage would do much to strengthen Canada's claim to the Northwest Passage.

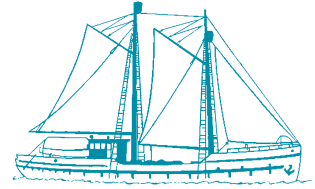
For the epic 1944 voyage the St. Roch had a larger crew of 13, including several constables who had made the 1940-42 voyage, a couple of experienced Arctic hands and two young Newfoundland seamen. The crew members included Pat Hunt, Stan McKenzie, William Cashin (the youngest at 17), Ole Andreasen (mate), Frank Matthews, James Diplock, GB Dickens, Rudolph Johnsen, Bill Peters (chief engineer), Lloyd Russell, William Marshall and Mitch Owens (for part of voyage to Pond Inlet).

One of the Newfoundland seamen who had signed on as a special constable was Stan McKenzie. Born at Port aux Basques in 1915, McKenzie had gone to sea at 16 and joined the Merchant Navy at the outbreak of WW11. By the time he became a member of the St. Roch crew in 1944 he had had more experience at sea than most having served in several freighters and survived the sinking of the SS Kittys Brook by a German U-boat off Nova Scotia in 1942. McKenzie says the 1944 transit of the NWP may have been faster than the 1940-42 west to east transit but it was no less demanding, "... sailing in icy unfamiliar territory caused the crew to work long demanding hours." He continues: "We were up there in the old snow and old frost...but being a seaman and a Newfoundlander I was used to that kind of weather. But Larsen set the watches ...and they were murder. You throw a 12-pound lead (sounding line) for six hours or more with a ship making 10 knots...and yes, you were working." Today, Stan McKenzie resides in Yarmouth, NS with his wife and is believed to be the last surviving member of the ship's 1944 crew. Among the St. Roch memorabilia he proudly displays his Polar Medal.

St. Roch departed Halifax July 23, 1944 and proceeded along the eastern coast of Nova Scotia but had to divert to Sydney for minor repairs. She left Sydney July 26 and encountered lots of fog and ice before reaching Pond Inlet August 15. Here, Larsen embarked an Inuit guide Joe Panipakuttuk, several members of his family and 17 dogs for the transit through the Northwest Passage. The family, including Joe's six year-old niece Mary Paniquisq lived on deck in a tent and assisted the crew. Larsen took a special interest in Mary's welfare and later when she was a teenager he assisted in arranging for her to attend high school in Hamilton, Ont. 'Mary of the Northwest Passage,' as Larsen referred to her, would go on to become a teacher, interpreter, writer and champion of Inuit land rights and the teaching of Inuktitut in schools. She died in 2007.

On August 17 the St. Roch departed the Baffin Island settlement to commence the transit through "the real Northwest Passage." Larsen reports the St. Roch encountered foul weather and "...the vessel continued to roll violently." Off Beechey Island the St. Roch made a short stop to enable Larsen and several crew to go ashore to honor three members of the Franklin Expedition who had perished in the area a century before. The crew also built a cairn and deposited records to mark their visit. The St. Roch continued on and made other brief stops to examine cairns, caches, collect relics of previous expeditions and to check out anchorages and water supplies.





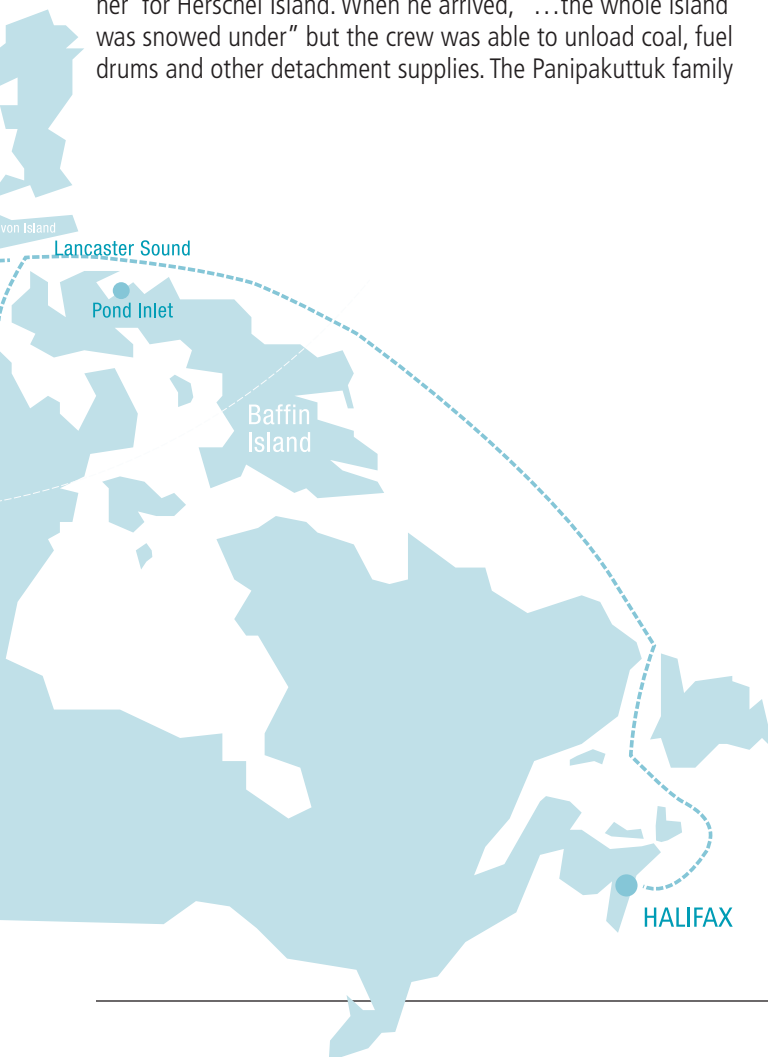
But the St. Roch's historic voyage was not all smooth sailing as the ship, in Larsen's words, "...sailed in water never sailed before by any vessel." In his report of the voyage Larsen's records: "On August 31... near Prince of Wales Strait we encountered the heaviest ice so far in the voyage and became locked in for a short period..." The St. Roch was able to work her way free and proceeded through Prince of Wales Strait and on September 4 reached Walker Bay where the ship had wintered in 1940-41. Larsen decided to overnight at Holman Island and the ship was visited by "...natives, the Hudson's Bay manager and the Roman Catholic priest." Stan McKenzie recalls the events of September 4: "...we had gotten through the part of the Passage that no one else had; everybody was feeling pretty good. The St Roch rode at anchor as though catching her breath...and for the first time the northern route of the Northwest Passage had been traversed."

The St. Roch continued on and encountered heavy ice along the coast and when attempting to enter Tuktoyaktuk September 8 had to ride out hurricane-force winds. Larsen knew he had to quickly get out of the area or risk being frozen in for the winter. Finally, on September 17 the weather cleared and Larsen 'gunned her' for Herschel Island. When he arrived, "...the whole island was snowed under" but the crew was able to unload coal, fuel drums and other detachment supplies. The Panipakuttuk family

was installed in one of the houses on the island for the winter. As Larsen noted in his report, "...we had no time to spare if we were to be successful in getting outside this fall." On September 21 the St. Roch departed Herschel Island as the harbour was freezing over. The ship would encounter heavy ice until she rounded Point Barrow. The St. Roch continued on at 'full throttle' and made it through the Bering Strait September 27. After a short stop at a US Navy base at Akutan, Alaska the St. Roch arrived in Vancouver October 16. This time, her record-setting east to west voyage through the Northwest Passage captured greater public interest and recognition than her west to east transit of NWP two years earlier. The St. Roch had travelled 7300 miles from Halifax to Vancouver in 86 days.

Within a year of the St. Roch's achievement as the first ship to transit the NWP in both directions Larsen was headed to the western Arctic again. In 1946 after a winter in the region and while returning to Vancouver Larsen decided to anchor overnight (without permission) in Russian territory (off Large Diomed Island) in the Bering Sea. He was arrested and briefly detained by the Russians. Upon his release the St. Roch was quickly underway and returned to Vancouver without further incident. But the times were changing after the end of WW11, and with improved transportation and air service connecting Arctic communities and RCMP detachments, the St. Roch had lost her primary role as a supply vessel and in 1947-48 she made her last trip north.

In 1950, under command of Inspector Ken Hall the St. Roch departed Vancouver for Halifax via the Panama Canal for an east coast assignment. This was the third laurel for the St. Roch, now the first ship to circumnavigate North America. In 1951, after a five-month provisioning trip to detachments in Newfoundland and Labrador the government decided to retire the St. Roch from active service. She would remain in HMC Dockyard, Halifax until 1954. That year, Henry Larsen took command of the St. Roch for a second time to return the 'Arctic Workhorse' to Vancouver (via the Panama Canal), with the hope that she would continue to serve Canada but as a floating museum. It was her last voyage but it was a memorable one for Larsen and the crew. When the St. Roch arrived at Vancouver the ship received a rousing 'welcome home' from the crews of other ships and the public. In 1958 the St. Roch was put into dry-dock at Vanier Park and the Vancouver Maritime Museum was built adjacent to her. In 1962 the St. Roch was declared a National Historic Site and in the early 1970s Parks Canada restored the vessel. In 1995 the St. Roch was made a permanent exhibit of the Vancouver Maritime Museum. ●





## Henry Larsen: 'Hanorie Umiarjuag'



The story of Henry Larsen is one of challenge, determination and achievement.

Doreen Larsen Riedel writes that her father was born in 1899 on the Norwegian island of Herfol in the Hvaler

Islands chain; his family made a marginal living by farming and fishing. Larsen was orphaned at an early age and brought up by Swedish relatives until he returned to Hvaler to continue his schooling. As a boy he was intrigued by the voyages of Roald Amundsen (whose family had connections with the Hvaler Islands) and read about polar exploration, geography and even the Northwest Mounted Police. He first went to sea at 14 with two uncles and at 15 he signed on as an ordinary seaman on a barque sailing to the US, Caribbean and South America. At 18 Larsen was shipwrecked off the coast of South Carolina and later joined a steamer sailing to South Africa, the East Indies and back to Norway. After four years at sea he entered the Oslo Nautical School in September 1919. Following graduation as a navigator, Larsen completed his military service in the Norwegian Navy.

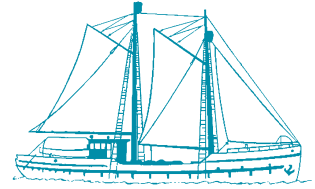
Finding work in the early 1920s was not easy even for a trained navigator. Larsen signed on as 4<sup>th</sup> mate of the Theodore Roosevelt and sailed to Seattle, Vancouver and the Orient. In 1922 Larsen met Roald Amundsen and the famous explorer's pilot Oscar Omdahl in Seattle. Larsen arranged a billet for Omdahl aboard the Roosevelt and their long conversations again stirred Larsen's interests in the Arctic. The following year Larsen signed on as navigator of a ship operated by Danish trader Christian Klengenberg who had been working in the western Arctic since 1905. Larsen made two voyages as navigator into the western Arctic between 1924-1927 and from Klengenberg's sons and son-in-law, learned how to hunt, handle dogsleds and survive in the Arctic. It was during a call at Herschel Island that Larsen came in contact with members of the RCMP and learned of the force's plans to build the St. Roch. He did not hesitate on his next career move. When he returned to Vancouver, Larsen applied for Canadian naturalization and admission to the RCMP. In 1928 Henry Larsen, an experienced navigator and recently enrolled member of the RCMP was heading north in the St. Roch. During Larsen's 20 years as captain of the St. Roch the Arctic became his home for 11 winters. In 1949 he was appointed Commanding Officer of the far-ranging "G" Division, including the Yukon, NWT and the northern regions of Ontario and Quebec. Larsen's commitment to the Inuit and the Arctic was mutual and to the northern people he was known as 'Hanorie Umiarjuag' (Henry with the big ship). In addition to his commitment to the north and the Inuit, Larsen also worked to improve the selection, training

and living conditions for RCMP officers who served in northern detachments.

In time Henry Larsen would come to be recognized as one of Canada's greatest Arctic explorers. He and his crew were awarded the prestigious Polar Medal by King George VI and among his other honours Larsen was awarded the First Massey Medal of the Canadian Geographic Society, was elected a member of the Explorer's Club and received an honorary doctorate of laws from Waterloo University. After his death, Larsen Sound at the juncture of Franklin Strait and McClintock Channel was named in his honour as well as a Canadian Coast Guard icebreaker and a school in Ontario. His daughter has written: "On retiring in 1961 Henry Larsen expressed his gratitude to Canada and the honour he felt in having come as an unknown Norwegian seaman, rising to Superintendent and having had the duty of carrying the Canadian Blue Ensign both ways through the Northwest Passage for the first time in history." Henry Larsen died at Vancouver in 1964. ●



Henry Larsen.



It was natural that St. Roch's historic voyages and her helping to maintain Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic along with the ship's association with Nova Scotia would be of interest to members of the Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia. RUSI/NS serves as a forum for the study, promotion and debate of defence and security issues and its membership includes serving and retired members of the Canadian Forces, RCMP and other enforcement agencies. RUSI carries out its different activities through a number of committees, including Security Affairs, Heritage and Honours.

In 2004, Michael Nash Kelly, chair of RUSI's Heritage Committee felt there should be a commemorative recognizing the St. Roch in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. He first discussed the idea with Inspector (later Chief Superintendent) Everett Summerfield, a member of RUSI's Board of Directors at the time. The proposal was fully supported by Colonel Murray Lee, President of RUSI/NS and the Board, and the Security Affairs Committee, with Inspector Dan Tanner as Chair, undertook the project that would involve a number of stakeholders, including the RCMP. (Inspector Tanner was serving in "H" Division at the time). By the summer of 2006 a small group of volunteers consisting of Inspector Tanner, Michael Kelly, Inspector (Ret'd) Keith Sherwood, Gordon Eastwood, Staff Sergeant (Ret'd) Bill Vance, Staff Sergeant (Ret'd) Lloyd Wallis and Commander (Ret'd) Len Canfield came together to start work on the St. Roch Commemorative project.

The St. Roch Commemorative Planning Committee set about to identify tasks, timelines and responsibilities. These included determining the type, design and location of the commemorative, approaching individuals and groups to support the undertaking, arranging funding and promoting the project. Meetings of the working group were held monthly or as required and the first priorities were the type and design of the commemorative, where it should be located and making contact with interested parties.

Dan Tanner had mentioned the design requirement to his daughter Heidi Hudberg, a fine arts graduate who was working as a designer with LaFontsee Galleries in Michigan. She volunteered to do research on the St. Roch and to prepare a design (style and size) for discussion and approval of the St. Roch Planning Committee. At the same time, Keith Sherwood and Michael Kelly were in contact with Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and provincial officials including the Waterfront Development Corporation (WDC), with regard to funding and regulatory requirements for plaques and monuments. WDC oversees waterfront development in designated areas on both the Halifax and Dartmouth sides of the harbour and since the St. Roch's historic 1940-42 voyage ended at King's (Queen's) Wharf in the centre of the historic Halifax waterfront, Planning Committee members felt this would be a natural location for a commemorative. Discussions with WDC would continue throughout the fall of 2006 and winter and spring of 2007 before the provincial agency advised the St. Roch group of its decision not to support the commemorative as proposed. In the meantime, Dan Tanner, Michael Kelly, Bill Vance and Lloyd

Wallis established contacts with members of the RCMP Veterans Association, including briefing and interviewing those who had served in the St. Roch. Several prominent Nova Scotians were approached to serve on the Executive of the St. Roch Planning Committee and to advise with regard to fundraising and related matters. Two former Lieutenant Governors, Hon James Kinley of Lunenburg and Hon Alan Abraham of Halifax readily agreed to lend their support and Brigadier General (Ret'd) Colin Curleigh of Parrsboro 'came on board' as a member of the working group. Gordon Eastwood commenced work on a communications/media relations plan, including timing and venue of the official announcement of the project. At the beginning of 2007, Inspector Wayne Jacquard of "H" Division joined the Planning Committee, providing a direct link with the RCMP, and Len Canfield assumed recording secretary duties and assisting with communications. A short while later Constable (Ret'd) Cyril Cameron joined to round out the working group.

By early 2007 a number of major decisions were made that would guide the Planning Committee through to the completion of the project and the unveiling of the commemorative planned for Oct 11, 2007—the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Roch's arrival in Halifax Harbour. Members agreed that the commemorative should be significant in terms of size and design rather than the tubular/ metal interpretative panel design proposed by WDC. They also decided on how the St. Roch was to be depicted on the commemorative, wording of the text

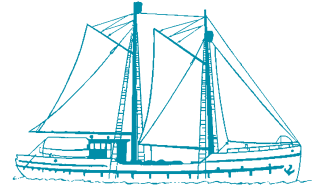
(in both official languages), the placement of the RUSI/ NS and RCMP crests and the route map. Michael Kelly, Gordon Eastwood and Len Canfield visited several monument companies in Halifax and Lunenburg to obtain advice and quotes on size, type of stone and other requirements. Along with Dan Tanner, they also viewed the Settlers Monuments in Lunenburg and decided this was the appropriate design for the St. Roch Commemorative. DeMone Monuments & Granite Products Ltd. was selected based on price and experience and proved to be most helpful in producing and installing the commemorative. The commemorative would consist of a base, a plinth (24 x 24 inches, 18 inches high at rear rising to 30 inches at front) and a 60 x 32 inch tablet.

Other initiatives undertaken in early 2007 included registering the association, opening a bank account and post office box, and producing St. Roch letterhead and promotional material. Increased emphasis was also placed on fundraising activities, an undertaking that would take considerable effort and several months to meet the target. Members also reviewed a communications plan to officially announce the project at the April 25 general meeting of RUSI/NS to be held at RCMP "H" Division Headquarters, Halifax. Both the RUSI/NS Board of Directors and "H" Division were provided progress updates on a regular basis.



*Hon. Murray Scott, left, and Michael Kelly, right, chat with Stan McKenzie, a member of St. Roch's 1944 crew during announcement of St. Roch Commemorative project at RCMP "H" Division HQ in 2007.*





Considerable time was spent organizing the April 25 meeting, including preparing the invitation list and venue, display of St. Roch photos/ memorabilia and publicity. Inspector Wayne Jacquard co-ordinated arrangements at 'H' Division and Dan Tanner, Michael Kelly, Keith Sherwood and Bill Vance worked with Murray Lee to develop the invitation list. The list included senior federal, provincial and HRM officials, RUSI/NS and RCMP members, veterans and community representatives. Gordon Eastwood and Len Canfield prepared media materials for national distribution by Canada NewsWire. More than 60 attended the presentation. Speakers, including Murray Lee, Michael Kelly and Colin Curleigh, outlined the history and significance of the St. Roch and the purpose of the St. Roch Commemorative project. Among the special guests were several members of the crew of the St. Roch, including Stan McKenzie, 89, of Yarmouth who was part of the 1944 voyage through the NWP and Sergeant (Ret'd) Willy Mott of Lake Echo who later served in St. Roch. Staff Sgt (Ret) Lloyd Wallis assisted in arrangements to bring Mr McKenzie to Halifax to participate in the announcement. Colin Culeigh, whose father served in the Arctic and later as Officer Commanding 'H' Division engaged Mr McKenzie in a question and answer session with the audience that proved to be a highlight of the evening. This was followed by a power-point presentation on the St. Roch, including photos of the 1944 voyage showing Stan McKenzie, other crewmembers and shipboard activities, and a later visit to the St Roch at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. Murray Lee summed up by saying that the announcement of the St. Roch project attracted the most interest of any RUSI event in recent years.

Throughout the winter and early spring Dan Tanner, Michael Kelly and other Committee members continued contact with the Waterfront Development Corporation with regard to finding a suitable location for the St. Roch Commemorative in the Queen's Wharf area and to provide WDC staff with background materials on the significance of St. Roch's achievements. In late May, WDC advised that "...the (WDC) Planning Committee felt the story of the St. Roch is a fascinating one that should be told to public ... However, they felt the significance of the St. Roch is more interpretative than commemorative, and should be recognized as an illustrated panel, consistent with existing interpretative signage along the waterfront. Concerns were raised regarding the size and design of (your) proposed monument, particularly with the proposed height and angle, and with its permanency considering the pending plans for redevelopment of this section of the Halifax waterfront." It was a setback for the Planning Committee but only a temporary distraction. Dan Tanner, Michael Kelly and Len Canfield contacted HRM councillors and officials with regard to other locations. Members checked out the Alderney Landing area in Dartmouth, found it suitable and Michael Kelly approached Dartmouth Councillor Gloria McCluskey seeking support for the St. Roch Commemorative. She was most supportive of the project and directed members to contact Denis Huck, Manager of Municipal Operations, Transportation and Public Services for HRM to discuss location and related requirements. A meeting with Mr Huck and his assistant Gary Musolino was quickly arranged and in early July, Planning Committee members and HRM officials visited the proposed location next to the Dartmouth Ferry Terminal. Given the superb location overlooking Halifax

Harbour and close to where the St. Roch underwent a major refit in early 1944 the members agreed that this was an appropriate setting for the St. Roch Commemorative. HRM staff worked with DeMone Monuments to ensure the timely installation of the commemorative.



*BGen. Colin Curleigh, Master of Ceremonies, welcomes guests to St. Roch ceremony at Alderney Landing, Dartmouth, NS.*

Fundraising activities continued through the spring and summer with Dan Tanner, Michael Kelly and Colin Curleigh writing letters and making personal contacts to raise the necessary funding for the project. Among the early contributors were RUSI/NS, the Curleigh Family and the Washington Marine Group, Vancouver. But more was needed. On the advice of Alan Abraham, Vice-Chair of the Halifax Foundation an application for funding was submitted to the Foundation and a significant contribution was subsequently approved. Michael Kelly arranged a second meeting with Councillor McCluskey and she arranged for a major contribution through the councillor's area development fund. With confirmation of these two contributions the Planning Committee could proceed with the final preparations for the unveiling of the St. Roch Commemorative October 11 2007.

In July and August, Dan Tanner, Michael Kelly, Gordon Eastwood and Len Canfield made several visits to DeMone Monuments in Lunenburg to discuss installation and other requirements for the Commemorative, including the addition of a bronze plaque recognizing the major supporters. Michael Kelly, on behalf of the group, signed the contract with DeMone. During a visit to Lunenburg Industrial Foundry & Engineering, Jim Kinley had offered to provide a bronze plaque for the Commemorative. Heidi Hudberg conferred by telephone and e-mail with DeMone's to finalize the design requirements.

By early August, the priority was planning for the Oct 11 ceremony, a major undertaking. At first the Committee felt the ceremony would have be held at the harbourside

location of the Commemorative at Alderney Landing. But given the changeable weather conditions in October it was decided to hold the first half of the ceremony, including remarks by RUSI/NS, RCMP, government and other speakers in the Alderney Landing Rotunda (several hundred feet from the Commemorative), and the actual dedication and unveiling outside at the Commemorative.

Because the ceremony would involve contact with a number of officials of different levels of government, RUSI/NS, RCMP, military, heritage and other community groups and special guests considerable time and effort would be required to prepare the invitation list and finalize the venue for the ceremony. Councillor McCluskey was invited to unveil the Commemorative. Members of the Planning Committee divided the different tasks among them and set to work. Since the RCMP would play a major role in the ceremony as one of the Force's main events marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RCMP in Nova Scotia, Inspector Wayne Jacquard took the lead in co-ordinating arrangements with "H" Division. The arrangements included on-site security and parking, presence of officers in Red Serge and arranging for the RCMP Pipes & Drums to perform prior to and during the ceremony. Keith Sherwood assisted in liaison with the RCMP and other government offices and co-ordinating the invitation list. Colin Curleigh advised on protocol and venue and agreed to act as Master of Ceremonies. Michael Kelly arranged for use of the Rotunda and catering and maintained liaison with HRM and other government officials. Bill Vance and Lloyd Wallis maintained liaison with the RCMP Veterans Association. Gordon Eastwood and Len Canfield prepared media kits and advisories, retained a photographer to

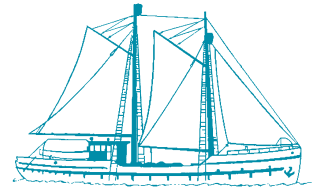
*From left, Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis, Insp. Dan Tanner, BGen. Colin Curleigh, HRM Councillor Gloria McCluskey, Col. Murray Lee and Asst. Commissioner Ian Atkins prepare to unveil St. Roch Commemorative at Alderney Landing, Dartmouth, NS in October, 2007.*



*Col. Murray Lee, HRM Councillor Gloria McCluskey and Asst. Commissioner Ian Atkins unveil St. Roch Commemorative.*







record the ceremony and produced the printed program and St. Roch bookmark for distribution at the ceremony. Murray Lee, President of RUSI/NS and Dan Tanner, Chair of the St Roch Planning Committee would greet officials and special guests, including Her Honour Mayann Francis, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia.

The ceremony commenced at 11 a.m. in the Rotunda overlooking Halifax Harbour. Approximately 100 guests and RUSI/NS and RCMP members were in attendance and there were displays of St. Roch photos and other memorabilia. BGen Curleigh, Master of Ceremonies welcomed all present and introduced the speakers and other special guests including Hon James Kinley and Mrs Kinley, Hon Alan Abraham, MPs, MLAs, HRM Councillors, Stan McKenzie and other RCMP veterans and Doreen Larsen Riedel and Gordon Larsen, daughter and son of Henry Larsen, and both of whom who had travelled to Nova Scotia for the occasion. The speakers included:

**Inspector Dan Tanner** outlined the purpose of the St. Roch Commemorative project, the planning and work that gone into the undertaking and introduced members of the St Roch Planning Committee.

**Assistant Commissioner Ian Atkins**, Officer Commanding "H" Division brought greetings on behalf of the RCMP and commended RUSI/NS for initiating the project.

**Colonel Murray Lee**, President of RUSI/NS said the St Roch Commemorative was one of the most important projects that RUSI had undertaken and thanked all members of the Planning Committee for their dedication in making the project a reality.

**Audrey Manzer**, representing the Board of Directors of The Halifax Foundation outlined the role of the Foundation in promoting and financially assisting heritage projects like the St. Roch Commemorative.

**Councillor Gloria McCluskey**, a former Mayor of Dartmouth said locating the St. Roch Commemorative at Alderney Landing was an important addition to the historic downtown area and would prove popular with residents and visitors alike.

On completion of the remarks, the official party, including Her Honour, BGen Curleigh, Col Lee, A/Commissioner Atkins, Insp Tanner and Councillor McCluskey departed the Rotunda, followed by the other guests, and proceeded to the Commemorative accompanied by the RCMP Pipes & Drums. Under a bright sky and warm breeze, RCMP Chaplain Bob Landry blessed the Commemorative and Councillor McCluskey, assisted by Col Lee and A/ Commissioner Atkins officially unveiled the memorial to the St. Roch. After media and other 'photo ops,' the guests returned to the Rotunda for light refreshments. It was also an opportunity to meet informally with RCMP veterans and other special guests associated with the St. Roch over the years and to learn first-hand of the exploits and achievements of the ship, her captain and crew.

Members of the St. Roch Planning Committee have met on several occasions since the ceremony to finalize arrangements for long-term maintenance of the Commemorative and how to maintain contact with like-minded organizations to keep the St. Roch story before the public, particularly among students. ●

From left, Stan McKenzie, BGen. Colin Curleigh (at rear), Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis, Michael Kelly, Insp. Dan Tanner and Insp. Keith Sherwood (seated) cut the special St. Roch Commemorative cake.



Doreen Larsen Riedel, left, daughter of Henry Larsen chats with former Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor Jim Kinley and Mrs. Grace Kinley at reception following St. Roch unveiling ceremony.



## Acknowledgements

### ***Significant Supporters***

The Halifax Foundation  
HRM Councillor Gloria McCluskey  
Royal United Services Institute of Nova Scotia  
Royal Canadian Mounted Police "H" Division  
Washington Marine Group  
Lunenburg Industrial Foundry & Engineering  
Curleigh Family  
General Dynamics Canada  
Sir Graham Day

### ***Special Thanks***

HRM Councillor Gloria McCluskey and the Manager and Staff of  
Municipal Operations/Transportation and Public Works  
DeMone Monuments  
Heidi (Tanner) Hudberg, BFA  
RCMP Pipes & Drums

### ***Ship St. Roch Commemorative Association***

Honourable Alan R. Abraham  
Honourable J. James Kinley  
Brigadier-General (Ret'd) Colin Curleigh  
Colonel (Ret'd) Murray Lee  
Inspector (Ret'd) Dan Tanner  
Mr Michael Nash Kelly  
Inspector (Ret'd) Keith Sherwood  
Mr Gordon Eastwood  
Staff Sergeant/Captain (Ret'd) Bill Vance  
Staff Sergeant (Ret'd) Lloyd Wallis  
Inspector Wayne Jacquard  
Constable (Ret'd) Cyril Cameron  
Commander (Ret'd) Len Canfield

### ***Notes***

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