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The Sinking of the Patrick Morris- One Sailor's Day Connie Drake Talks with Don Nugent and Cape Breton's Magazine There were no passengers aboard the Patrick Morris on Sunday, April 19, 1970, when she headed out of Sydney Harbour on a rescue mission. The herring-seiner Enterprise had sent out the call: "MAYDAY, MAYDAY. CALLING THE GULF GERD. WE'RE SINKING, WE'RE SINKING. TRY AND SAVE US." The reply: "WE WILL DO THE BEST WE CAN. WE'RE HEADED STRAIGHT FOR YOU." Within four minutes, the Enterprise was gone. Harry Bruce writes In Lifeline: "The nor'easter was now a Force 10 'whole gale.' The wind was up to 55 knots. The snow mixed with the spray that the wind tore off the breaking crests of thirty-foot waves and, as the mush hit cold metal that night, it turned to ice." The ferry Patrick Morris left North Sydney in search of survivors. At 6:51 a.m., April 20: another Mayday. The Patrick Morris was in trouble. As it turned to get a body from the water, the stern door was driven in by a following sea. Built in 1951 as a stern-loader with a big door aft to let trains aboard, the Patrick Morris was converted when the Canadian government bought her in 1965 • sealing the stern and using only the Connie Drake, North Sydney: Well, I was born in St. Jacques, Newfoundland, and I came to North Sydney in 1949, and I joined the Cajbot Strait. I fished with my dad in Newfoundland, you know. I was only young. We fished down there and we used to hit some bad storms and poor old Dad, you know, he was sick. And he used to say to me, "Now, if you give up pad- I, dling, I'm j' finished," he said, "we're gone. So," he said, "don't give up on me." And when we'd get her to the shore, I know the) side doors for loading containers. She was turned back into a train ferry in 1968, re? establishing the stern entrance • the order re? quiring the stern door "to be very strongly constructed and water? tight to withstand the action of following seas, and to be at least I equal in strength to the ship's side at that point." But the stern door couldn't stop the sea that night. Connie Drake was one % of fifty-one crew and o' im-imm-: ficers on board the Patrick Morris that night. blood and everything'd be coming out of my hands, from rowing. I was only fifteen years old when I came up here. I went on the Cajbot Strait and I stayed on the Cajbot for twelve years, and I left the Cajbot and I went ashore then working as a stevedore. I worked there for thirteen years I think it was. And then I went back to sea again. I never left the company (present-day I;- . Marine At- I' lantic). I fit • I stayed with the company. So then I went on the Marine Nau- tica, the Marine At- lantica, the Frederick Carter, Am- CAMERON MUSIC SALES? 307 GRANVILLE ST. PORT HAWKESBURY, N.S. BOE 2V0 ALL Fiddle Music Books • Videos IVIUSIC Tapes and CD's SUPPUES Dorey Dan Spoons from Nfld. Harmonicas • TinWhisdes Violins • Bodhran Drums Takamine Guitars • Bagpipe Supplies IVIAIL ORDER SERVICE (902) 625-5135 (902) 625-3851 IB S Ug Cape Breton Boarding Kennels Ltd.' • Modern Heated Facility for Dogs and Cats • Indoor - Outdoor Dog Kennels • Dogs exercised daily • Long-term Boarding Rates available • Certification of Vaccination required

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