

[Page 45 - The Sinking of the Patrick Morris - One Sailor's Day](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 74](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1999/6/1

the next day when it all settled in. You'd see guys crying, you know. Buddies that they worked with--they were gone.... Then the next morning, after everybody got straightened away, everybody got feeling good, the mate made up a song about the Patrick Morris going down. We all got in this big mess room, and he sang the song. But a couple of our guys, they were hurt, you know. When you were trying to get away from the ship, you had those big paddles. Oak paddles they called them. Long paddles. You were pushing them up against the ship, trying to get away from the other ship. She cracked them off like toothpicks. There were a few of our guys got hurt.... The next day was a bad day. But he wouldn't come in here. He told us he had no charts to come in North Sydney, so he had to take us to Port Cartier, Quebec. They took us up to Port Cartier, Quebec, and by bus took us into the airport. The plane was all ready when we got there. I'd say a half an hour or more from that. Oh, it wasn't a half an hour, I'd say five or ten minutes, we were in the air and on our way home. I still had my cook pants on and my T-shirt. The skipper on the iron ore boat, the Ger? man ship, he said, "What are you going to do with the life jackets?" I said, "I never want to see one again." But I mean, when you're married and you got four kids, what do you do? That's your life, going to sea. So what do you do? Natu? rally I was scared. I was scared Poly Tech PRODUCTS LTD. CUSTOM fri MANUFACTURED IpiN CAPE BRETON • SOLID VINYL EUROPEAN DESIGN • BAY, BOW & ROUND TOP ' f WINDOWS & SKYLIGHTS *'-*? • GARDEN & SLIDING PATIO DOORS Builder " Cape Breton TOLL FREE 1-888-295-5995 LOCAL 295-3163 • BADDECK SATELLITE OFFICE • DARTMOUTH of going back again, but I had four kids. I had no choice. There was no jobs, so I had to go back to sea again. I didn't want to go. I had no choice but go. (How long did you stay at sea after that?) I stayed till I got put on pension. That's five years ago. But I never in my life had any fear of water. I never thought one of them CN boats would ever go down. Never. I thought they were always too big to go down, you know, that nothing would happen. But I'm telling you, that sea--I never saw nothing like it in my life. It was savage. It was an awful experience for me. Of all the years I went to sea, you know, I nev? er. . . . I had some bad times out there. People think this Gulf's not bad, but she can get really bad. (What sort of a reception did you get when you landed in Sydney?) Beautiful. You know, there was a lot of people there and they asked us did we need money, asked us if we need cigarettes, and any way they could help us. Well, I lived here in North Sydney, but most of the guys, you know, were from Newfoundland, and they got the hotels for the night, put them up. Some of the guys made the ship go? ing across the Gulf that night. But we all had to go in for an interview, you know-- for an interview about what happened. But after that, maybe a day or two days after, you go for another interview, till they got everything on (it), you know. There's not much you could tell them. I mean, the sea did everything. Once the sea took this big door out, the ship was disa? bled right then. Nothing you could do. (So there was no hiiman error involved?) The sea. The sea done everything. You know, I never had no fear of the sea, but I'm tell? ing you, that's an



awful power. More power Need a Radiator? Muffler? Shocks? Brakes?
RAD-PRO Specializing in Radiator Repair & Recores Heaters Water Pumps, Etc.
FIVE LOCATIONS: Sydney Downtown 562-2300 and Grand Lake Road 564-5547
Antigonish: 863-6090 • Port Hawkesbury: 625-3781 tntDAS 'Specializing in
Mufflers Brakes Shocks Springs New Glasgow: 752-8777