

Open Gangway, an Account of Halifax Riots

Midland author's book takes us back to a chapter in nation's dark past

by Shirley Whittington

On May 8, 1945, VE Day, Sargeant Stan Redman of the RCAF Marine Squadron marched in a victory parade down Barrington Street in Halifax.

It was an "eyes-front" situation, but the young sargeant couldn't help noticing some unusual goings-on out of the corner of his eye.

As he tells it, "A sailor sitting unconcernedly on a case of expensive Scotch whiskey, before him an open case from which he plucked bottles...in St. Paul's cemetery, the weathered tombstones almost obliterated by

the blue uniforms festooned over them and naval ratings swilling beer in Canada's greatest open air canteen..."

Sargeant Redman was witness to the Halifax riots, the wild celebration of victory in Europe which began in a spirit of fun, but careened into craziness fuelled by hundreds of cases of booze "liberated" by servicemen and civilians. Redman remembers clearly that the gutters ran with booze and the streets were ankle deep in broken glass.

Two days and a night of chaos caused \$3

million in damages to Barrington Street businesses, nearly all of which were totally looted.

Two stores were burned out. Birks, Eatons, Hudsons, Zellers, Woolworths and many other stores were closed indefinitely after the riots. It was a calamity and Sargeant Redman (who was also a writer,) made mental notes of what he saw, and wisely collected newspapers and photographs of the destruction.

Now his recollections and research are incorporated into a well written and fascinating account of something

almost unbelievable -- an uncontrolled riot led by thousands of Canadian servicemen -- mainly sailors.

Open Gangway, an Account of the Halifax Riots 1945 is published by Lancelot Press of Hantsport Nova Scotia. It is Redman's first published book, but certainly not his first published writing. Stan Redman's name is familiar to local and national newspaper readers. He has described himself as a "consistent and caustic contributor of letters to the editor." Over the years he has had many magazine articles published centering on

his hobbies and interests -- boating, stamp collecting, and history.

He considers the publication of Open Gangway as a door opener. "I have written another book on the British Monarchy. It is a critical one -- I'm a republican -- but I ran into the stone wall that confronts writers. It seems you can't get published without an agent, and you can't get an agent till you're published.

Several publishers looked at Behind the Ermine Curtain but most considered it too explosive. Meanwhile, Redman completed an espionage trilogy The Unicorn Side, which also awaits publication.

Redman, determined to get a foot in the door, tried to think of a subject about which he knew a lot, and which was colourful and interesting. The Halifax riots proved to be a natural choice.

As well as the graphic description of the wanton destruction caused by the Halifax riots, Open Gangway also deals with the subsequent investigations. Says writer Redman, "The Royal Commission over which Mr. Justice Kellock presided was almost a model of how not to conduct a public inquiry, and included suppression of evidence, failure to explore obviously relevant areas

and a barrage of leading questions. None of this was much credit to the legal profession."

Materials from the Naval Court of Enquiry are still considered so politically volatile that they are being held inviolate in the public archives of Canada.

MP Doug Lewis tried to help in securing records for writer Redman's perusal. Since the book has been published, Lewis has been informed that some of the material is available for Redman's perusal if he wishes to have it copied at his own expense, and only after a civil servant has deleted the sensitive parts.

Open Gangway's most pervasive message is of the deep and apparently uncloseable gap between the people of the maritimes, and those of the rest of Canada.

Redman's book says that during the war Haligonians lived with a constant litany or criticism delivered by unhappy Upper Canadians billeted unwillingly in Halifax.

He says, "The largely unwanted visitors had few inhibitions about commenting on the lack of night life or any other kind of life, on the gouging rents paid by those so fortunate as to find a room, the meagre allotment of one bottle of liquor per person per month. In short the servicemen were sick

and tired of the war and considered themselves exiled...where their presence was bitterly resented..."

In fact, claims Redman, the word was out, the navy was going to take Halifax apart.

They almost did, and it was a performance that the Navy was not proud of. Admiral Murray was judged to have shown poor supervision and planning and was removed from command. His picture is now conspicuously absent from the display of former commanders in chief.

Very few history books give more than a perfunctory nod to the dreadful riots of May 7 and 8 1945. Stan Redman's book is therefore a valuable addition to our own knowledge of ourselves and our history. It is well researched, brightly written and historians especially will find it almost compulsively readable.

With reference to Redman's efforts to obtain additional (and unattainable) research material MP Doug Lewis said, "If Canadians are to learn from the past, then I would suggest that the past must be opened to people with a legitimate interest in history!"

Open Gangway, does more than open the past. It makes it into an exciting memorable story.

Girl Guides of Canada Rocky Shores District

Guiding news and views

by Christine Brush

Rocky Shores is in desperate need of a shelving unit, wardrobe, or old bureau to use to store materials for our Brownie and Guide Companies.

If you can help us, please contact Mrs. Janet Berriault - 526-6856.

I wish to thank the many people who help us out when we need a hand and get little public recognition for it, without your help what would we do! I would also like to thank the girls who turned out on Wednesday to march in the Remembrance Day Parade.

As Christmas draws near we are all busy in this district arranging Caroll singing, Christmas crafts, goodwill projects, parties and of course our float in this years Christmas

Parade.

If you wish to help with any of these please contact Mrs. Janet Berriault (District Commissioner) or Christine Brush (Public Relations).

The 1st. Midland Pathfinders are joining the Penetang Pathfinders in a course on First Aid given by St. John Ambulance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov. 23 - 1st. Midland Brownies are having an Enrollment

Nov. 25 - 2nd. Midland Brownies are having an Enrollment

Nov. 28 - Girl Guide Campfire Rally

Dec. 5 - Christmas Parade

Dec. 10 - Annual District Christmas Party

Dec. 15 - Annual Huronia District Hospital Christmas Sing Song

Following too closely, police charge

Following too closely was the charge laid against Olive Wood, 64, of Gervais Street,

Midland, by Midland town police, after a traffic accident on Hugel Avenue late Monday afternoon.

Police report that the

Wood car struck the rear of another east-bound car in front of 1014 Hugel Avenue. The other driver, John Georgas, 46, who lives

at that address, was turning left into his driveway. Georgas was charged with a seatbelt violation. Both drivers suffered minor injuries.

Second car obstacle in accident

A Port McNicoll man who passed a car on Heritage Drive Monday and found another westward car turning off the highway before him braked and skidded into the north ditch.

Harry Baumgardner, 54, and Eliane Baumgardner, 16, both of Bayview Avenue, Port McNicoll, received minor injuries. Baumgardner was not charged. His car left Heritage Drive at 5:50 p.m. just east of King Street.

Volunteers

Would you like to be a volunteer with The Simcoe County District Health Unit?

Contact your local Health Unit office and request a volunteer application form.

Bring used equipment to the



before the SKI & SKI BOOT EXCHANGE Saturday, November 28th

SHUTTERBUG PHOTO MOVING NEXT DOOR SALE

Present stock being cleared. Many bargains on wide selection of cameras, lenses, flashes, and slide viewers

All Frames and Mats	20% off
Konica FC1 Kit	\$359.53
Konica FS1 Kit	399.50
Konica Auto Winder	111.50
Kodak Handle	34.12
Mini EF 110 Camera	33.00
PF 428 Camera (110)	24.00
CareFree 110 Camera	12.30
28 m.m.—3.5 Hexanon Lens	135.00
50 m.m.—1.7 Hexanon Lens	105.00
40 m.m.—8 Hexanon Lens	78.00
Auto Vista Slide Viewer	14.85
Vista II Viewer	7.11
Slide Viewer No. 6	5.85
Slide Viewer No. 5	3.00
T. B. 555 Flash	45.50

and many more bargains...

Art Supplies coming soon



Shutterbug Photo

219 King St. Midland, Ontario
526-9622

You are invited to attend

Century 21

"Career Night"

Thursday, Nov. 26,
7:30 p.m.

to be held at
Highland Motel
King Street South

If you are considering a rewarding and interesting career in real estate, we urge you not to miss this opportunity to learn about the professional sales training programs offered through Century 21. Geared to better equip you towards becoming a "Neighbourhood Professional". This session includes a slide presentation, show case, and will touch on the excellent promotional material available to help you become a successful salesperson in the real estate industry.

Gord Gerrie
of Century 21 Training Academy

will be with us to conduct "Career Night". This is planned as an informal, as well as a most informative event with refreshments afterward and not a late night. We want you to join us...and bring along a friend if you wish. See you Thursday night.

Phone our office 526-7881

to confirm your invitation,

no later than Tuesday, November 24



Ports of Huron Real Estate Ltd.

Call 526-7881
317 Midland Avenue

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