

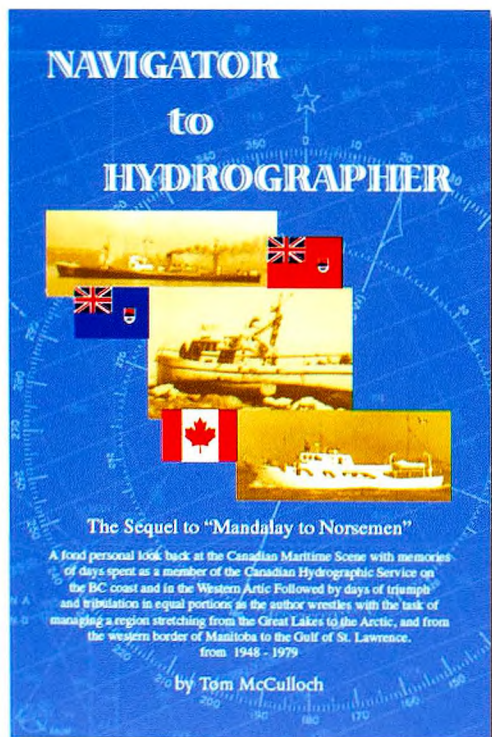
Navigator to Hydrographer The Sequel to "Mandalay to Norseman"

By Tom McCulloch, published by Trafford Publishing, Victoria BC, 2005. xx + 278 pages, 74 photos & maps, ISBN 1-4120-4592-4, \$28.95 Cdn. (US\$ 23.16, £ 13.04, € 18.82).

Tom McCulloch provided his autobiography of his youth and first seven years of employment, and other adventures, in his first book – *Mandalay to Norseman*. This book picks up on his life from when he emigrated from the British Isles to Canada in 1948 until 1979. He promises to continue the story in yet a third volume.

In 1948, Tom was just 23 years old, had his master's foreign-going certificate, married and freshly arrived in Canada. He and his wife started a new life in Port Arthur (now part of Thunder Bay), Ontario where they settled down near some relatives. Continuing his maritime career, he shipped out on a bauxite carrier as a second mate. But this did not last long because he got in a fracas about undeclared rum on board. Next was a round the world trip as second mate on *Seaside*, a Park class WW2 freighter. Trying to 'swallow the anchor', he took some itinerant jobs in and around Port Arthur, but these did not work out well, so he found himself on a number of canallers (small ships that plied between Montreal and Kingston) or lakers (larger ships going between Lakes Ontario and Superior). Here, he felt that he never got the responsibility to navigate the ship.

It was now 1951, and Tom was off again on more oceanic trips, this time on *Angusglen*. By the end of this globe-circling trip, Tom realised that Canadian-flagged shipping was disappearing, and so were jobs. He



spotted an advertisement that the government of Canada was looking for mariners with foreign-going certificates to become hydrographers. Soon, he was pulling up stakes and heading to Victoria, BC, in his permanent career.

The middle 100 pages of the book deal with Tom's career as a sea-going hydrographer on Canada's Pacific and western Arctic waters. It would be tedious to recount each year's travails, but his frustrations being a Canadian hydrographer on a US Coast Guard cutter or Canadian buoy-tender trying to do surveys on an opportunity basis while the ship supported the supplying of Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line sites from the Alaska border to Cambridge Bay, led Tom to push for the Canadian Hydrographic Service to have its own dedicated ship. This ship materialised in the form of *Richardson*, a 60-foot adaptation of a halibut fishing vessel. Twice, Tom circumnavigated Alaska to the Canadian western Arctic where the ship was wintered at Tuktoyaktuk and he commanded her on several other years. Escapades of being caught in the ice and navigating between grounded ice and the shore signify the uneasiness of the job.

Tom was one of the surveyors invited to the 'Slaughter on Booth Street'. This was where a number of hydrographers with potential for higher positions were interviewed by the director at Headquarters on Booth Street (Ottawa) and ALL candidates were found lacking in formal education. In retrospect, this disaster turned out well. It led to proper senior management training and university education for staff. It also led to the formation of the Canadian Hydrographers' Association (now, Canadian Hydrographic Association) to promote professional development through training, publications and conferences.

Later Tom was selected to be Regional Hydrographer of Canada's Central and Arctic region, originally

based in Ottawa, but shortly thereafter in Burlington, Ontario. From there, he became the Regional Director General for the science programme. The effect of the debacle at Booth Street obviously left scars with Tom. He has spent much of his latter part of his career, including beyond the reporting period of this book, fostering training programmes and standardisation of those requirements internationally through International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), Fédération Internationale des Géomètres (FIG), and Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy (CASLE). For his later career, he recounts seemingly endless trips to far-away places in support of these objectives.

What are the merits of this book? To the mariner, international surveyor or hydrographer, it is the recounting of one man's exploits in his profession. To the general public Canadian, it is the vastness of this land and the difficulties in surveying and developing it. To the staff of CHS, there is history here that is not recorded in such books as *Mapping Northern Lands* or *Charting Northern Waters*. Tom has been able to elaborate on specifics and individuals that those two books could not.

But to the political mandarins, who will never read this book because it is not written as a 3-page briefing note or presented orally in a 5-minute time slot between health care and military vehicle issues, there is strong evidence that hydrography in Canada needs a major revival. Tom only gives one-half the story – the way things were. Someone else needs to paint the picture of the present situation – the lack of ships, the lack of funds to carry out surveys, and the lack of understanding of the needs of the mariner (there is hardly a 'ticketed' mariner left in the organisation).

Reviewed by David H. Gray, Ottawa, Canada