

THE PROVINCE

VANCOUVER 9, B.C.

6 Nov. 1967.

Dear Gerry:

Many thanks for your recent note. Your old pal Mr. Stewart must indeed have a remarkable memory. Last night I looked up some of my references and the dates all fit.

The schooner Sapphire, which was unreported at Victoria 44 days out of San Diego on Feb. 1, 1888, ~~xxx~~ arrived safely, you will be happy to hear, on Feb. 4. So there is one worry off your mind.

Virago and Sparrow-hawk, were in fact torpedo boat destroyers, twin screw, four funnels, 30 knots...(ain't that sumpin'), 300 tons, built by Laird of Birkenhead. They arrived at Victoria Jan. 1893, and remained on the station until April 1903, when they sailed for China.

There was an earlier Sparrow-Hawk on the Pacific station, which in 1872 was sold and converted to a sailing ship, and made several voyages to Australia with lumber. Her engines were placed in the old Moodyville Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, where they were still in existence at the beginning of this century.

The Triumph was a third class battleship, which was on the station 1878-82, and again 1885-88, which fits in with Mr. Stewart's dates. The Sappho was employed on Bering Sea patrol about the same time. The Warspite was on station 1890-93. The sloop Shearwater was on station ~~1901~~ 1901-1914, and she was the last of the Royal Navy establishment to be based permanently at Esquimalt. In 1915 she escorted two Canadian submarines, purchased at Seattle in August 1914, round to Halifax. I have somewhere, I hope, a photograph of her taken by my father in Burrard Inlet, circa 1906.

Ships of the Royal Navy on the Pacific station patrolled normally from the Strait of Magellan to Bering Strait, showing the flag whenever a South American revolution erupted, and protecting the sealers in the Bering Sea. They coaled normally at Nanaimo and at Coronel in Chile, and likely at Panama, which may explain why they didn't coal at San Diego, although I imagine they didn't have too much bunker capacity. It was nice to hear from you again, and give Mr. Stewart my compliments.

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Tom Hocking