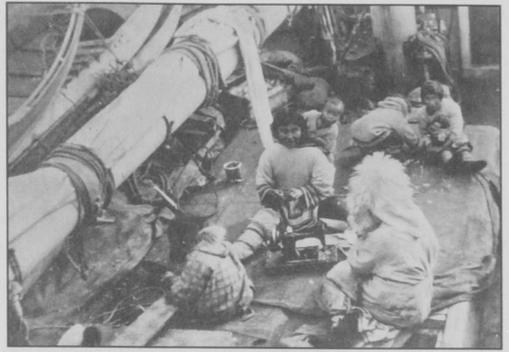


Larsen and *St. Roch* were ready for a return trip through the passage to Vancouver. This time, Larsen decided to take “the more northerly route, through Lancaster Sound and west to Melville Island and then across McClure Strait to Prince of Wales Strait. This was the real Northwest Passage, I felt, and it had never before been navigated.” Only Sir Edward Parry had come close, in 1819.

After two false starts, Larsen left late in the season on July 26, 1944. Arriving at Pond Inlet on August 13, Larsen hired Inuk guide and hunter Joe Panippakussuk, who came aboard with his six-member family and seventeen dogs.

Sailing from Pond Inlet on August 17, *St. Roch* anchored off Beechey Island three days later. Always the Arctic scholar, Larsen went ashore to visit the site of Franklin’s winter quarters. Like Amundsen before him, Larsen felt that he was on hallowed ground. Throughout his Arctic career, Larsen stopped to visit the sites of the earlier explorers and to collect relics. “Tribute is ... due to those early explorers,” he explained, because “their sacrifices and exploits blazed most of the trail we took.” By the end of August, *St. Roch*



The Panippakussak (Panipitakochoo) family living on St. Roch’s main hatch cover, 1944.

Courtesy Vancouver Maritime Museum

stood off the entrance to McClure Strait: “We were now in waters never before sailed by any vessel.” Carefully weaving through the ice, down into Prince of Wales Strait, within a few days *St. Roch* reached Walker Bay, the site of the ship’s winter quarters in 1940–41.

They had essentially conquered the passage, but, mindful of the ice, Larsen pushed on. The ship rode out a savage winter storm at Tuktoyaktuk, then carried on to Herschel Island, where the Panippakussuk family was landed. Now came the final race with the ice to reach Point Barrow. *St. Roch* won the race

ST. ROCH II CREW PREPARING TO SET SAIL

On July 1, 2000, the RCMP coastal patrol vessel *Nadon* will set sail from Vancouver, following the same route the *St. Roch* took almost 60 years ago. At the helm of the *Nadon*, which has an average speed of 25 knots and a top speed of 40 knots, will be captain Cpl. Ken Burton and a cycling crew of four RCMP regular members who will staff the boat at any one time.

As reported in the Fall 1999 issue of *the Quarterly*, the *Nadon* will travel up along the B.C. and Alaska coast, into the Arctic Ocean, and make its first major stop at Diomed Island in Siberia, where participants will re-enact the fisticuffs that took place when Henry Larsen, captain of the *St. Roch*, was arrested for an unauthorized port visit. The *Nadon* will complete the Northwest passage during August 2000 — welcoming Nunavut into Confederation along the way — then travel down the Atlantic Coast, up along the St. Lawrence River and the U.S. eastern seaboard to Havana, Cuba. It will then travel up the western seaboard and arrive in Vancouver on January 1, 2001. If all goes according to plan, the *Nadon* will be the first vessel to circumnavigate North America in one season.

Stay tuned for further updates in future issues of *the Quarterly*.