

Ex-RCMP Member Conquers English Channel

by Daniel Hall

Vince Pogachar, an ex-RCMP member, at 57 became the oldest Canadian to swim across the English Channel to France, on July 27, 1989. Pogachar also had the distinction of being the third oldest swimmer in the world to have accomplished the feat. He was the eleventh Canadian to have completed the Channel crossing, and is believed to be the only ex-RCMP member to have done so.

Pogachar, from Grimsby, Ontario, has lived in Ottawa since 1966, and first attempted the crossing in 1984. By his records, his successful crossing was completed in 15 hours, 50 minutes. Involvement with a swim marathon club in Ottawa, led Pogachar to consider answering the challenge of a Channel crossing. He describes the "falling into place" of events, and feeling that it "might be possible!" Pogachar's philosophy was to make it possible and pursue/follow it up. He hopes his crossing will inspire others to attempt future crossings.

Costs involved in the crossing: training, airfare, accommodations, etc, were absorbed by Pogachar. He is a quiet, unassuming individual who is not fazed by any of the "notoriety" surrounding many previous crossings by other swimmers.

Pogachar received coaching from the Tsunami Swimming and Triathlon Club,

and especially from Trevor Tiffany, his mentor and guide. Although he had Canadian supporters, Pogachar travelled to England alone. He had made arrangements to charter a boat and hire a pilot a year before the crossing. British acquaintances served as helpers on the boat during the crossing, and were on hand to feed Vince at regular intervals, to maintain his stamina and energy levels.

Pre-swim Training

Before the crossing, Pogachar embarked on a regimen of fitness, training and nutrition, which were an integral and important part of the preparation for the channel challenge. Vince received information from a range of people involved in sporting activities, training and performance. After three years, Pogachar's dream finally came about.

Pogachar started training for his 1989 crossing of the Channel in the late fall of 1986. He trained daily for a 1987 attempt, which was aborted after five hours in the water because of poor sea conditions. Pogachar resolved then to attempt another crossing, even though it meant another year of intensive training. However, before starting a swim in 1988, Pogachar had a mishap on the dock in