

ABOARD THE H.M.C.S. CHARLOTTETOWN SOMEWHERE NEAR THE ARABIAN SEA

JACOB McCABE

We left Halifax on the 17th of October and it's now the 29 November and out of the forty- four days, we've been at sea for thirty-six of them for twelve hours a day.

Each department pretty much lives together. I live with twelve other guys and none of us are gay, and we all do the same job. We work twelve hours a day but it's broken up. I work 7:30am-12:30pm, then 5:30pm-12:30am and so on. During my time off it's my time, but I also have to do laundry, clean, write letters, eat, and sleep. But you can do what you want like watch movies, drink, just about anything. I usually tan!

It's not like it's hard; far from it. Actually the job is pretty easy when you get used to it. The only thing is the lack of sleep but the saying goes, "work hard, play hard," and, fuck, do we ever play hard. 75 cents a beer and \$1.50 for a double – we can buy a quart for around ten or eleven dollars, depending on what you want. Sea time is shitty, but when you're not sailing, we do next to nothing so it evens itself out.

When we are home the work day goes like this: start at 7:30am, break from 10:00-10:30am, lunch from 12:00-1:00pm, break from 2-2:30am then go home at 3:00pm. We never work Friday afternoons (it's almost a rule).

I've been in for almost two years and so far I've been in seven different countries and I'm only twenty one years old! With everything that's going on, it's not like the news; we're not enduring any hardships or going through the turmoil of war. We're doing our fucking job; it's the military for Christ's sake; it isn't suppose to be like Disneyland or a blowjob in the theatre. We get treated pretty good, three meals a day, a bed to sleep in, hot showers, all the porn I can watch. I mean where else can you get paid to travel the world and paid good too. Don't get me wrong, tension is high over here, but fuck, it's the job, right? We are definitely trained for it. It's not like we don't know what we are up against. You don't realize it but when you see a ship that's four football fields long with 5,000 people on it launching airplanes

off it that they are actually destroying human life, that's some pretty heavy shit that you're a part of it. But it's the job. You're not renting videos at Blockbuster.

But like I said, everyday around 1:00pm - 1:15pm, sprawled out on a blanket working on my golden brown belly no worries here. The only hardship I have as a single guy being in the military is when the beer machine (like a coke machine but spits our beer, I'm not joking) is getting refilled and whether or not I'll need to be carried back to ship when we get into port. It is hard for married people having ten days to say goodbye, baby – see you in six months and merry Xmas, but we have email and phones . So you can talk to the missus daily and I can't see that being a good thing, but anyway. Over here, the hum of the ship isn't boo hoo or bitch bitch – it's pretty good. You don't think about how long you'll be away or what life is like back home. It's more like, "Fuck, I'd love a big mac."

It is the soldier, not the reporter,
Who gives us the freedom of the press.
It is the soldier, not the poet,
Who gives us the freedom of speech.
It is the soldier, not the campus organizer,
Who gives us the freedom to demonstrate.
It is the soldier, not the lawyer,
Who gives us the right to a fair trial.
It is the soldier, who salutes the flag,
Who serves under the flag,
And whose coffin is draped by the flag,
Who allows the protester to burn the flag

-CHARLES M PROVINCE

People talk about how proud Americans are to be American. Well I'd stand rounds with anyone who argues the pride of a Canadian! We are loved and treated like kings worldwide, for anyone to laugh or mock Canada's tributes in the world's past or present is a fool.